A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY

ENOCH JOHNSON

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A Captain of Industry

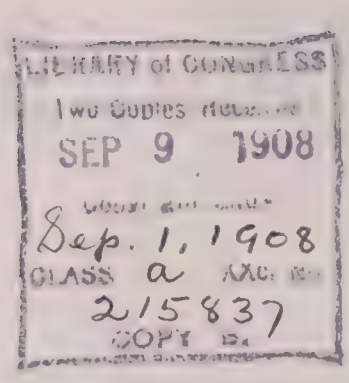
Katherine.

A Captain of Industry

By

ENOCH JOHNSON

THE C. M. CLARK PUBLISHING COMPANY
Boston, Massachusetts
1908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CONTENTS

Chapter		*Page*
I.	The Ellerton Mills	3
II.	Philip Middleton	9
III.	Office and Mill	14
IV.	The House on the Hill and the People in it	19
V.	Philip Middleton Dreams a Dream	28
VI.	What Came of it	33
VII.	"Number 29"	41
VIII.	An Introduction under Peculiar Circumstances	47
IX.	In which Philip Middleton Proposes a New Fad for those who have the Time for it	60
X.	Containing a Brief Description of Two Worthy Persons, and Showing Mr. Elridge's Appreciation of Skilled Labor	73
XI.	John Waters	86
XII.	A Meeting of the Union	94
XIII.	Philip Hears from a Fair Disciple	124
XIV.	After Two Years	135
XV.	Clouds on the Horizon	147
XVI	The Special Meeting	159
XVII.	Father and Son	175
XVIII.	Partings, Sad and Otherwise. In which, also, Mr. Hartland Shears a Lamb—so he Thinks	196

Chapter		*Page*
XIX.	Philip is Remembered in his Father's Will	222
XX.	The Committee of Three	236
XXI.	Which Concerns Itself Wholly with the Matter of "Soap," and Shows Why Mr. Middleton must have Lost Faith in the Efficacy of that Exceedingly Useful Article	249
XXII.	The Formal Notice	256
XXIII.	The Strong Arm of the Law	268
XXIV.	The Hearing of the Case	282
XXV.	Lawyer Langdon has a Caller who is not a Client	302
XXVI.	The Decision of the Case	317
XXVII.	Sociology	323
XXVIII.	From the Library to the Drawing-room	344
XXIX.	Mr. Middleton Treads the Wine-press	369
XXX.	A Quarrel between Partners, which, However, is Settled in a Very Business-like Way	378
XXXI.	A Round Peg in a Square Hole	390
XXXII.	The Meeting in the Park, and What Followed	407
XXXIII.	The Trial of the Conspirators	432
XXXIV.	The Law of Conspiracy	454
XXXV.	Mr. Hartland Takes a Change of Venue	465
XXXVI.	Edith's Letter and its Answer	475
XXXVII.	An Industrial Revival	488
XXXVIII.	Conclusion	497

ILLUSTRATIONS

Katherine . . . . Frontispiece

PAGE

"Well if it isn't Phil Middleton!" . 53

"Traitor!" he cried . . . 185

"Go, then! Go!" 194

"Do take a more comfortable chair, Mr. Langdon." . . . 353

"To the mills! To the mills!" . 428

There he lay on the floor. . . 474

He threw the paper into the fire . 484

A Captain of Industry

CHAPTER I

The Ellerton Mills

Mr. Edward Middleton, president of the Ellerton Iron & Steel Works, large, portly and florid, was seated at his desk in his private office at the close of an afternoon in the month of May, 18—, looking over a balance-sheet which had been prepared for him by the secretary of the company. The information conveyed by this balance-sheet was evidently of an agreeable nature, for Mr. Middleton smiled from time to time as he scanned it. His knowledge of the great increase in the company's business had, of course, prepared him for a favorable showing from the books; but it was gratifying to have the general estimates he had made approved and reinforced by the greater definiteness of the secretary's figures.

Indeed, the score of years or so which measured the life of this flourishing corporation had brought to it a constantly increasing volume of business. The last six years of this period, especially, had been marked by

a great industrial activity throughout the country, and by an unprecedented increase in railroad extension, which had created a corresponding demand for steel rails, bridge, and other structural material which made up the output of the Ellerton Mills. This growing business was followed, naturally, by an enlargement of the company's plant and payroll; so that now the works covered an area of ten acres of ground and gave employment to about a thousand men. The huge chimneys belching smoke and flame by day and night and the long lines of workmen tramping to and from the mills with their swinging dinner-pails were impressive sights. They gave, too, those infallible indications of prosperity to which our politicians have always delighted to point.

Prosperity, measured by the usual standards —expansion in area of building and output of product, with consequent increase in dividends—had certainly come to this great industry of which Mr. Middleton was the head.

The mills were located a half mile from the business center of Ellerton, a county-seat in one of the Middle Western States. Their growth from small beginnings to their

present ample proportions had been most gratifying to the citizens of that municipality, who took a pardonable pride in an institution that so well advertised their city. The city had, in fact, grown with the mills, and was largely indebted to them for whatever importance it had acquired in the business world.

The mills constituted the chief attraction in Ellerton, and strangers in the city were invariably taken out to see them. The *Ellerton Argus* might well have had stereotyped a certain passage which appeared with unvarying regularity in its local columns whenever the advent of strangers was noted. Such strangers always "visited the rolling mills and other places of interest." The editor of the *Argus* might have been embarrassed had he been called upon to state what other places of interest there were in Ellerton; for it would have required somewhat of the sharp-sightedness of that journal's namesake to have found any.

The mills, certainly, were worth seeing, even if they were not worth going very far to see. A stranger in the city with a little time on his hands might have passed it interestedly and perhaps not unprofitably in a visit to

this thriving institution. He would have found the usual quiet of the town streets sharply contrasted in the strenuous work of the bare-breasted and perspiring iron-workers, who, as they hurried hither and thither over the steel-plated floors in their varied assignments of toil, seemed to feel resting rather heavily upon them the weight of the primal curse. In fact, the mills well exemplified the modern industrial system, under which, by a sort of left-handed interpretation of the biblical penalty, a large and an increasing number of the human family, while eating bread regularly enough, are doing their sweating vicariously.

Certain it is that anyone who held a good-sized block of stock in the Ellerton Rolling Mills at the time this history opens could have comfortably housed, clothed and fed himself without the necessity of undergoing any vulgar sweat-baths. The stockholders at this time were not many. When the company was organized and the enterprise was in the nature of an experiment, stock subscriptions were solicited. The citizens of Ellerton subscribed liberally, and the stock became well distributed among them. When, however, the success of the venture became

assured the leaders in the enterprise subjected the bulk of the stockholders to that interesting eliminating process known as "freeze out," and possessed themselves of most of the stock. Of course, the victims of the freezing-out process in Ellerton had the satisfaction of knowing that they had helped to establish an important industry in the city. And had any one of these, as he pocketed his small gains—or losses—expressed a doubt as to this being a sufficient recompense he would, without a doubt, have been deemed by the beneficiaries of the aforesaid process as lamentably wanting in civic spirit and loyalty.

The company was now, therefore, if not in a strictly legal sense, certainly in a very practical sense, a close corporation, and Mr. Middleton found himself the owner of a majority of the stock, with all the power and emoluments which such ownership conferred. It was quite natural, therefore, that he should rise from the examination of the secretary's balance-sheet on the afternoon in question with that feeling of satisfaction and self-gratulation which usually comes to those who see about them the multiplying signs of material welfare.

Glancing out of the window he saw his carriage draw up in the roadway which skirted the small stretch of ground in front of the office building. Closing his desk he put on his hat and stepped into an adjoining room where a young man was engaged with the elderly secretary of the company over some routine work. Addressing the young man he said:

"Come on, Phil, it's time to quit. The carriage is waiting."

"I think I'll walk to-night, father," said the young man. "I feel like stretching myself."

"Well, if you don't start soon you'll have to stretch yourself to get home in time for dinner. Don't be late."

Saying which, Mr. Middleton waved a good-night to the secretary, walked out to the carriage, and telling the coachman that Philip was not coming, entered and was whirled homeward.

CHAPTER II

Philip Middleton

Philip Middleton did at once proceed to stretch himself; but not in a way to lessen the distance from the office to his home. The stretching came in the shape of a protracted yawn. Relaxing lazily from this physical exertion he sank down in his chair with a sigh, and with hands thrust deep in his trousers pockets and feet thrown forward, he fell into a brown study. The secretary's "good-night" elicited from him but a mechanical response, and he still sat buried in his thoughts until some time after the general quiet about him gave evidence that the numerous clerks employed by the company had left the building.

Now, what was the subject of these engrossing thoughts? True, it was springtime, and a guess might have been hazarded that the young man's fancy was disporting itself in that realm of sentiment to which the poet has dedicated the vernal season. But if you had staked your penny upon that hypothesis

in expectation of being entertained with a page or two from Cupid's diary, you would have been disappointed. This is a truthful history, and in its adherence to facts it must at times descend to the commonplace. At the risk, therefore, of chilling the interest of the sentimental reader at the very outset of this narrative, it must be stated that Philip was not in love. He was, in fact, very much out of love with everything and everybody, himself included.

Three years had passed since young Middleton had exchanged the free and full life which is the privilege of a son of wealth for the cramped and confining one of the office. "Play days are over, my boy, work begins," his father had said to him the fall following the completion of his college course. And straightway he became one of the human cogs in the huge wheel that turned the Ellerton Mills. As assistant to the company's secretary he had been spending that novitiate in the business which was to prepare him for responsibilities in the management of the company comporting with his relationship to its president, and which the latter by reason of his control of the corporation was in a position to confer upon him.

Philip had entered upon his duties cheerfully, even with enthusiasm, for he was not of the number of those who look upon prospective wealth as affording immunity from obligation to do their work in the world. And in the Ellerton steel mills he saw open before him an honorable and successful business career.

He was destined soon to realize, however, the full import of his father's words, and how sharply drawn was the line of demarcation between work and play. An ardent lover of out-of-door life and its invigorating sports which give zest to intellectual work, he had, previous to his entry into business, succeeded in maintaining that happy balance, *mens sana in corpore sano*, which had kept him uniformly up to the level of good feeling.

The transition from a condition in which the faculties of body and mind were in full play to one in which his muscles seemed in danger of atrophy through lack of accustomed exercise was to his buoyant nature like a cold plunge without its pleasurable reaction. Too conscientious to shirk his duties he had submitted without grumbling to the exactions of his position; but he had often wondered why the demands of business should require

the sacrifice of normal, healthful living. What was considered a young man's commencement in life—his entry into business—was, as a matter of fact, in most cases the end of right living. In office and business-house a confining slavery to the desk and counter was begetting a race of physical manikins. On the other hand, in mill and mine and factory —in every field of manual labor—the incessant toil of the hand left little leisure for culture of the mind, producing a surplus of brawn, but leaving the workers little more than intellectual dwarfs. Toilers with hand and brain seemed alike the victims of an arrested development. Work, too, appeared to be an end in itself and not a means to ulterior and higher things. The ordinary amenities of social life seemed foreign to the world of trade. "It isn't business" was an expression common enough; and that a thing wasn't business was enough to discredit it no matter what sanction it might have in personal benefit or altruistic motive. Strange, indeed, if the dedication of the powers of body and mind to a grasping, self-seeking and sordid commercialism, all too apparent everywhere, did not leave an impress of some salient characteristics. It has made of

America a nation of money-makers and—dyspeptics.

So thought Philip Middleton, and such were his cogitations as he sat lost in gloomy abstraction.

Rousing himself and closing his desk with what to sensitive ears might have sounded not many degrees removed from a slam, he strode from the office repeating those lines from Lamb—that charming apologist for the life inoperative—which were so suited to his present mood:

> "Who first invented work, and bound the free
> And holiday-rejoicing spirit down . . . . .
> To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood?"

CHAPTER III

Office and Mill

As Philip left the office building the workmen composing the day shift were streaming out from the mills. He stopped to look at them. They were going at that quick step so noticeable in factory and mill hands, as if unable to cast off the habit of haste which the demands of their work imposed upon them. To Philip life in the mills was more or less of a sealed book. True, the office building was adjacent to the mills. But it might as well have been in the next county so far as any communion between office force and mill workers was concerned.

An observant traveler on the lower Mississippi will have noticed that after the confluence of that river and the Missouri the waters of the two great rivers flow southward for some distance side by side without mingling, the one stream clear and limpid, the other dark, turbid and repellent. So the two human streams from office and mill flowed side by side, in contact but without

fraternal mingling, kept apart by a sense of separateness as rigid as ever divided two Indian castes.

When, therefore, Philip, obeying an impulse of mingled curiosity and interest, fell in with a workman whose way seemed to lie in the direction of his own, the latter looked up with surprise and touched his cap deferentially.

"I guess you're glad this is Saturday night, aren't you?" said Philip.

"Yes, I am," replied the man, "and to-morrow I'll be sorry that the next day is Monday."

"Then you don't get sufficiently rested on Sunday?"

"Well, we mill men are pretty much like machines, you know. When a machine is stopped after running a long while the bearings need to be well oiled or there'll be a good deal of creaking and squeaking when it's started up again."

"Your Sundays, then, do not sufficiently oil the bearings," said Philip smiling.

"No, for they don't come often enough. We need three Sundays—two to be split up among the other days of the week."

"Your hours are long?"

"From six to six, sir, with short stops

between the furnaces."

"Between the furnaces?"

"Yes, sir. I'm a roller, sir; and when we've put the bars from one furnace through the rolls we wait till the heaters have another furnace ready."

"Twelve hours is certainly a long pull. You could well spare about three hours of your work, and it would do some of us in the office a great deal of good if we had that much of it."

"Perhaps it would, but I guess you wouldn't be falling over yourselves in your hurry to get at it if you had the chance," said the man with a laugh.

"Probably not," replied Philip. "We often forego what would be of benefit to us out of regard for appearances."

"Yes, people generally don't look much further than the outside of things."

"Further than the outside of things—no," echoed Philip meditatively.

Looking more closely now at the man beside him Philip saw that he was apparently of middle age, with a large, well-knit frame that might have been commanding but for a slight stoop of the shoulders, due, doubtless, to excessive heavy lifting and carrying. His

cap was pushed back on his head revealing a high forehead which received some accentuation from a slight baldness. Deep-set blue eyes looked out kindly from under beetling brows. A prominent nose and large mouth called for a chin of like liberal proportions, but this was covered by a close-cropped beard which was plentifully sprinkled with gray. There should have been a fullness of the face to match this largeness of the features. The face, however, looked pinched and drawn, betokening all too plainly the tutelage of the taskmaster and the deadening influence of repression.

When Philip, reflecting how much books were a part of his own life, asked about his reading, the man laughed cynically.

"Oh, the company doesn't think that's good for us. At any rate, no allowance is made for it. After we've been jerking and pounding red-hot iron for twelve hours at the mills we don't feel much like taking up books when we get home."

At this point their ways diverged. Philip turned and looked at the man sympathetically.

"Your name?"

"Waters, sir—John Waters," he replied, surprised that he should be asked,

"Middleton is mine."

"Yes, I know who you are, Mr. Middleton; but I don't know why you've been walking and talking with me. You haven't been trying to trap me into saying things, have you?" giving Philip a quick, searching look.

"Yes, I have," said Philip with a quizzical look; "and you'd better look to your job."

Waters caught a glimpse of the open, generous, laughing face as it turned from him, and felt reassured.

So they separated: Waters to add spice to the commonplaces of the supper table by dilating on the unheard-of episode of a mill man's walk and talk with the president's son; and Philip to reach home and meet the reproving looks that are usually visited upon one who is guilty of that most heinous offense in these days of good living—coming late for dinner.

CHAPTER IV

The House on the Hill and the People in it

The Middleton mansion was well in evidence on a bird's-eye view of Ellerton. It was seated on the brow of a hill overlooking the town, and this vantage-ground was supplemented by the largeness of plan on which it was constructed. A less ambitious structure would have better suited the natural elevation and blended more harmoniously with the modest proportions of the other town houses. But if æsthetic fitness had not been consulted in the building, that feeling which finds satisfaction in mere bigness had been abundantly gratified. For there the house stood, a huge pile of brick and stone that might have reflected credit upon a metropolis, but gave to a city of less than ten thousand inhabitants somewhat the appearance of top-heaviness.

Mr. Middleton did not need so large a house, for his family was small and the contingency of its increase sufficiently remote

to relieve him of any obligation on that score. Perhaps he was afraid that his executors might not fitly link him with coming generations through the medium of stone and marble, and so went into the monument business on his own account. For, as in many of our cemeteries towering shafts of granite give to those who rest beneath them a sort of posthumous fame, even though they created little stir when in their mortal bodies, so, often, a heaven-kissing edifice will blazon abroad the name of its owner, although the halo of influence radiating from his own proper person is neither so marked nor so far-reaching as to call forth the *digito monstrari* of an admiring populace.

This graveyard analogy may not be inapt in another particular. For if diligent search should be made by the curious among the numerous closets of many ostentatious palaces, a varied assortment of skeletons would doubtless reward the search.

Some of the events of this history might be dragged from their natural sequence if a tour of inspection were to be made at this time into the hidden recesses of the Middleton mansion to see if it harbored any of the gruesome objects just mentioned. Let the

house stand for the present looking down in unclouded splendor upon the town houses below, which in their comparative littleness seemed to be kowtowing to their imperial sovereign on the heights.

It can hardly be doubted that if the editor of the *Ellerton Argus* had been put to it he would have named the house on the hill as one of the "other places of interest" in Ellerton. And an exterior view alone might have justified this. As to the interior of the house, much in little may be given by way of description if a remark be quoted which was not infrequently on the lips of certain young men about town when the house happened to be the subject of discussion, namely: "It's mighty fine inside." It is suspected, however, that in saying this the aforesaid young men desired not so much to convey information as to get the benefit of the necessary inference that they had the entrée of that great house. For its social circle was exclusive, if not always select.

And now as to the occupants of this palace —those who dignified it by calling it "home." First of all, there was Mrs. Middleton the Second. Mrs. Middleton the First had reigned but one short year over Mr. Middle-

ton's household, and had then abdicated after presenting him with a son and heir. Her early death was a blow from which Mr. Middleton was slow to recover, for it had been a love marriage, neither party being dowered with anything more than a heart-grappling affection for the other, but both old-fashioned enough to consider this sufficient capital with which to begin wedded life. Mr. Middleton's second matrimonial venture was more *a la mode*. In the happily exact phrase of the world, he "married money." Not that Mrs. Middleton was without some of those charms of her sex which when properly focused are so effectual in the multiplication of benedicts; but Mr. Middleton would probably have proved immune from the infection of such charms had they not been considerably enhanced by the fact that she was an heiress, and would therefore bring some needed capital into the matrimonial partnership. This she did; and with a liberal base of supplies thus established, Mr. Middleton had, with a modicum of shrewdness and of business foresight, waged a notably successful campaign in the pursuit of that greatest thing in the world—the dollar, to which pursuit he had

now dedicated his energies. His second wife gave him every encouragement in this direction. She was anxious, indeed, to have him forget that he had ever been poor. For she held rather close affiliation with that spurious aristocracy of wealth which seems willing enough to draw its sustenance from what it pleases to call the lower strata of humanity, but hedges itself about with factitious distinctions which bar from its fellowship the great proletariat upon which it feeds. An aristocracy which ostentatiously flares an escutcheon emblazoned with the device of the dollar-mark, oblivious of the bend sinister which crosses it.

But if Mrs. Middleton's social sympathies were not very wide reaching, her influence was quite of the positive sort within the narrow sphere to which she had restricted her interests. As the wife of the richest man in Ellerton, and the mistress of its most palatial home, she assumed without protest the position of leader and dictator in the society affairs of the city; and any deliverances from the house on the hill touching those nice questions, "Who's Who" and "What's What," were received as *ex cathedra*. This position of leadership, of course, imposed

upon Mrs. Middleton certain social obligations. And these she discharged to the entire satisfaction of that small coterie in Ellerton which constituted its fashionable set. Her teas, "at homes," dances, card parties, etc., were notable events in the social life of the town, and were always quoted by the "smart set" when comparisons were made or standards were to be established. No society function was considered launched under very flattering auspices that did not have her encouragement and co-operation; and all public entertainments for charity—those delightful affairs where the well-to-do may ease their consciences by ministrations to the poor at arms' length—found in Mrs. Middleton an ever dependable patroness.

With his wife thus secure in the leadership of Ellerton society, and himself first among the business men of the city, Mr. Middleton should have been a happy man. But happiness rarely comes to the man whose affections are dormant; and anything in the nature of sentiment was quite episodical in Mr. Middleton's life. It was only when he fell into a reminiscent mood and reverted in thought to the great affection of his young manhood that he felt the surging of any tender emotions.

He would then, at times, betray how strong a hold that early love still had upon his heart by manifestations of affection for the boy that had been left him as a pledge of it: manifestations that might have been somewhat disquieting to a woman of a more penetrating mind than his second wife.

Married life, however, has a wide margin for practical duties, in the performance of which affection is a more or less negligible quantity; and in the discharge of such reciprocal duties Mr. and Mrs. Middleton had acquired that marital "modus vivendi" which so often serves to mask a loveless union.

An additional bond between them was a daughter, now blossoming into womanhood. This daughter came upon the scene at a time when Mr. Middleton's financial star was ascendant. A child of the proverbial "silver spoon"—"lap of luxury"—"indulgent parents," et cetera, she would readily have fallen into the fiction-writers' category of the "spoiled child." But Edith Middleton was not spoiled—not yet. Budding womanhood does not less graciously unfold under the influence of the refinements, the elegancies and the gentle nurture which wealth affords, any more than the hillside daisy blooms

less fair for the richness of the soil and favoring sun and air. No; girls are not spoiled by being well taken care of, however it may be with their brothers. The spoiling does sometimes come later, when they become matriculates in fashion's school, and cramp and dwarf their lives by a servile conformance to its code. No such fate, however, had yet befallen Miss Edith, although there was danger ahead under the tutelage of a mother who was a slave to conventionality and whose ideas and ideals were drawn from the fashionable world.

Edith Middleton did not lack admirers. Nor were they all confined to Ellerton. She had created quite a sensation the summer previous, her first season at the seaside, where her beauty and vivacity, coupled with great expectations of a material nature, gave an unwonted zest to the matrimonial angling which is always such a fascinating diversion at summer resorts.

It is needless to say that Mrs. Middleton looked upon her daughter's popularity with the utmost complacence. Her ambition for Edith stopped with no ordinary marriage. She hoped that when the time came for her to relinquish her guardianship to another,

it would be upon the consummation of an alliance that should at once make secure a high social position for her daughter, and effect a corresponding uplift of the entire family. True, there were none to dispute the social pre-eminence of the Middletons in Ellerton. But Mrs. Middleton had dreams of conquest which far transcended any possible in a provincial town. She had visions of high life in a metropolis: a larger theatre for the enactment of that fashionable drama in which she and her daughter should shine resplendent stars.

Such were Mrs. Middleton's dreams. But Philip Middleton had a dream of a far different character, and one that his stepmother would have regarded as having all the earmarks of a nightmare.

CHAPTER V

Philip Middleton Dreams a Dream

Varied and curious has been the speculation as to the causes and nature of dreams. Soothsayers and wise men are not now, as of old, called in to interpret them and make known the meaning supposed to be hidden in them; and yet, with the remembrance of the vividness and vraisemblance of some of these visions of the night, are we quite satisfied with the lexicographer's definition that they are but a succession of phenomena having no external reality to correspond to them?

Many people find no difficulty in accepting as literal fact the Scriptural stories of divine communication through dreams, who yet see in dreams nowadays little more than the haphazard and inconsequent jangle of brain cells. Has, then, the sacred stream of inspiration been diverted and ceased to flow in such channels? Or, has it become dried up altogether?

Whatever be the real nature of dreams, we know some of the conditions under which

they visit us. For instance, if we have had an unusual experience during the day which has actively occupied our waking thoughts, images closely associated with the experience are quite likely to be impressed upon our sleep. Adepts in spiritism account for this by saying that our absorption in thought upon the unusual experience has magnetized us (*sic*) and so made us peculiarly susceptible to spiritualistic influences, and fit media for communications from disembodied intelligences touching the particular subject in mind. Nonsense! Bosh! says our matter-of-fact friend. And perhaps it is. Inasmuch, however, as science has not spoken the last word on the subject of dreams, we may enlarge the boundaries of our knowledge by giving a tentative ear to any theory that is offered to explain them.

Now, Philip Middleton, not content with his deep cogitation at the office and his talk later with John Waters, did some further thinking along the same line that evening. He kept company with his thoughts until a late hour, then went to bed, and to sleep, and dreamed this dream: He seemed to wake and to see standing at his bedside an old and venerable man. The dress of the

strange visitor was of another time and place, for he was loose-robed and girdled. His long white hair and beard were quite in keeping with his patriarchal garb. His looks, however, gave the impression of maturity rather than of decline, for there was about him no sign or suggestion of decrepitude. The brightness of the eye, the clear complexion, the fullness of feature, the benign and gracious mien—all told of the dominance of that life of the spirit, which with advancing years simply forms new and differing molds of physical beauty.

In his left hand he held a large scroll which was partly unrolled, and with his right hand he appeared to be tracing the inscription upon the page. Now he spoke. His words, however, were not articulated, for his lips did not move. The voice seemed to come as an emanation, yet withal, in clear, mellifluent and pervasive sound. May mind thus, some day, communicate with mind, thought become effluent, needing not the cumbrous vehicle of sense for its transmission?

The words which were borne in upon the consciousness of the dreaming sleeper were these:

"Hear this fable, my son: A young tree growing in a nobleman's park conceived a

dislike for the coarse fertilizing soil which the park gardener had scattered thick about its base. 'I will have none of that dirty stuff,' said the tree, and turned its roots downward to escape contamination. But there was that in the gross and uninviting soil which the tree needed for its sturdy growth. Besides, the roots gradually converging instead of diverging, their hold upon the ground became less and less secure; and one morning after a severe wind-storm during the night the gardener making his round in the park came upon the tree stretched upon the ground uprooted!"

As the sound of the last word died upon the air, the venerable presence evanesced.

And now the scene of Philip's dream was changed. By one of those sudden transitions which are so common to the dreaming state, he found himself leaving the office at about three o'clock in the afternoon and going into the mills. He went to the quarter where John Waters was working, took the grappling tongs from his hands, which Waters relinquished without any show of surprise, and then took his station at the rolls, while Waters went to a near-by cupboard, gathered up his coat and dinner-pail and left the mills.

Now, with the help of his companion roller he seizes with the tongs the bar of heated metal from the "buggy" brought by the haulers from the furnace, presents it to the rolls, catches it as it is repassed, passes it through the second rolls, and so on through all the roughing rolls till the bar lengthened into a rail is passed on to the finishers. Back he goes now to the first station, and on comes the rattling buggy with another bar from the furnaces, and the roughing process is repeated. Occasionally the pliable bar becomes bent and catches in the rolls, and then he drops his tongs, picks up a sledge and pounds the refractory metal into tractableness. With the pulling, hauling and pounding the physical strain increases; perspiration pours from him; he sees the veins in his bared arms distend, the muscles become protuberant, and inevitable exhaustion approaches. He sways, staggers, slips and falls —oh, horrible!—in front of the red-hot bar coming through the rolls from the other side! The men at the rolls stand aghast. The blinding, excoriating mass is upon him!

And Philip awakes to find the morning sun beating into his face from the east window!

CHAPTER VI

What Came of It

Monday evening Mr. Middleton again rode home alone, and Philip went into the mills and watched the rollers at their work. John Waters's face paled when he first caught sight of Philip. He was plainly agitated as he saw him closely noting his every movement, and his agitation showed itself in his work.

"What's the matter, Jack?" asked his companion roller. "Are you bashful before company?"

"I reckon that must be it," responded Waters evasively.

He felt relieved when the last bar from the furnace they were then drawing from was put through the rolls, for he then had a chance to rest while the heaters were getting the next furnace ready. Going over to a bench at the side of the mill he sat down and wiped the unusually copious perspiration from his face.

Philip went over to him.

"What sort of a roller do you think I'd

make, Waters?"

Waters started.

"You might do as well as I did on that last round," he replied, recovering himself.

"I noticed you were a little unsteady on your feet. What was the trouble?"

"Oh, I had a queer dream last Saturday night, and your coming in reminded me of it and upset me a bit."

"Saturday night!" Philip exclaimed with rising curiosity. "What was it?"

"I dreamt you came in and took my place at the rolls. Funny dream, wasn't it?"

"More than funny, for I had the same dream."

"You did? When?"

"Last Saturday night."

Waters passed his hand over his face.

"I guess it's owing to the talk we had Saturday," he said, attempting to remove from his mind the impression of the uncanny.

"Quite likely," said Philip. "How would you like to have the dream come true?"

Waters looked at Philip incredulously.

"I'm not joking, Waters. I mean it."

"Well, sir, of course I wouldn't mind getting a lay off; but I don't see how we're going to arrange it. I can't afford to lose

the time, and you're not exactly cut out for a roller. You wouldn't like this sort of work."

"Oh, yes I would—about three hours a day of it. It'll be better than dyspepsia tablets. And three hours less of it every day will be a good thing for you. You needn't lose any time, either. I'll see Mitchell, and have it understood that the time I put in is to be your time, so that your time-check will not be any the smaller. You can break me in gradually at the rolls, and when I get trained sufficiently to go it alone I'll come in at three o'clock every afternoon and relieve you, and you can go home."

"All right, sir, I'll go you, seein' I can't lose," said Waters with a laugh. "When do you want to begin?"

"Well, let's see—this is Monday. I shall need a few days to make my arrangements. Suppose I come in Thursday afternoon for my first lesson?"

"Very well, sir; but you'll need different clothes from what you've got on now for this sort of work."

"Oh, yes, I know that. That'll be part of my arrangements. I'll have to add another suit to my wardrobe—of a somewhat different kind, I imagine, from any that I've ever worn."

"A trifle different, yes," said Waters, smilingly taking note of young Middleton's neat-fitting, tailor-made attire.

After some further talk touching the matter in contemplation, Philip turned to go, saying as a final word:

"Don't speak of this matter to anyone at present, Waters. The thing will be an experiment for a while, and if it fails, why, the fewer there are to laugh at me, the better. If I become a full-fledged roller, I sha'n't care who knows it."

"All right, sir—mum's the word."

Philip now looked up the mill superintendent.

Superintendent Mitchell (given name, Patrick) was a tall, lank, raw-boned son of Erin, who was little indebted to book learning for his position. He held it because he knew the iron business, and knew it thoroughly. He had spent so much of his life in doing things rather than in studying how to do them that he had acquired an aptitude that approached near to instinct. Like an experienced *chef* who scorns to measure out the condiments that he puts into his toothsome delicacies, Mitchell needed no scales to tell him the requisite amount of scrap to

put with the pig-iron in a puddling furnace to produce the best results. He knew little about the chemistry of the process of steel making; and had he been asked by one of those people who always like to throw such things into a formula, what percentage of the carbon must be released from the pig-iron, his face would have assumed an expression of blank interrogation. And yet, he knew well enough when the decarburizing process was complete, and just when to draw the puddle-balls from the furnace. He could look into a reheating-furnace and tell whether or not the piles were ready for the rollers, without knowing how long they had been heating. He could take a turn at the rolls with a readiness and dexterity not excelled by any roller in the mills; and could roughly, but with remarkable approximation to accuracy, gauge the output of product from a given quantity of raw material.

This all-round proficiency had been acquired by a long apprenticeship in the mills. He began as a common workman, at the age of eighteen, and had been in turn a hauler, heater, puddler, roller, boss-roller, and for five years now, mill superintendent. He was not a boastful man, but he was aware that

he knew something about the rolling-mill business, and had been heard to say that when he found a man in the mills that knew more about the business than he did, he would stand aside and let him have his job. Inasmuch as the position of mill superintendent was the best-paid of any in the mills it is fair to presume that the idea that any one would take up the gage thus thrown down was somewhat remote in Mitchell's mind.

It need hardly be said that such a man was given a free hand in the management of all matters inside the mills, and in such matters received, and would have brooked little interference from the office; and had Philip Middleton, presuming upon his relationship to the official head of the corporation, instructed Mr. Patrick Mitchell to take note of the arrangement he had made with Waters, he would probably have been sent about his business in short order, and would have been well laughed at had he made complaint at the office on account of such rough treatment. But Philip had too much tact to commit such a blunder. He had the good sense to ask the superintendent's consent to such a strange departure from the ordinary

routine of the mills.

No man (or woman, either) is entirely free from vanity. Ben Franklin, it will be remembered, thought it would not be altogether absurd if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life—a comfort, doubtless, because of the pleasure derived from an occasional gratification of it.

Superintendent Mitchell had a measure of this supposedly human weakness and was gratified by the frank recognition of his authority by the president's son in the request which he had preferred. At the same time the oddity of the proposal elicited from him a good-natured guffaw.

"Ye're purty fine stuff t' make a roller of."

"Not too fine, I hope," replied Philip smiling.

"I dunno; you young fellers with pens behind yer ears ain't much at mixin' with th' likes of us."

"That may be the worse for us," said Philip. "I'm willing to take the chances on three hours a day of it doing me any harm."

"All right. I don't mind yer tryin' yer hand at it, if ye want to; but ye'll have to hold up yer end, me b'y. Waters is one of our best min, an' if his time's goin' on his

wurk's got to go on too."

"Of course," said Philip, "that's only fair; but I think I can soon learn to do the work."

With the matter thus satisfactorily arranged, Philip left the mills, having enjoined upon Mitchell the same silence that he had requested Waters to maintain while this most unusual venture was in its experimental stage.

CHAPTER VII

"Number 29."

Philip had chosen a good time for his experiment. It so happened that on Wednesday of that week his father left for the South on one of his periodic trips in the interest of the company, and would be away from home some ten days. Philip could, therefore, go ahead without any protest from him against his embarking upon a course which, he felt sure, his father would regard as in the last degree quixotic. What arguments he should use to get his father's consent to the continuance of such a course, he did not ask himself.

He now made preparation for Thursday. With the help of some suggestions from Superintendent Mitchell, he provided himself with the clothes, shoes and gloves suitable for the mill work. He next appropriated to his use a vacant room in the office building which admitted of easy access to the mills. This room he fitted up as a dressing-room, with the necessary accessories, including a bath-tub.

Thursday afternoon at three o'clock he left his desk in the office, repaired to the dressing-room and changed his clothes. It would have required a view at close range for an acquaintance to have recognized him as he strode into the mills in his workman's apparel.

Nor was the change wholly external. He experienced a change of feeling, as well. Clothes have a certain psychologic influence. As the chameleon takes color from the thing to which it cleaves, so our minds are mysteriously influenced by our bodily vestments. Must not the actor be dressed for his part; the dectective have his disguises? And this not alone to heighten the sense of reality with those they desire to impress. Both need the inspiration that comes from a good make-up in order to effect an adequate merger of identity. The beggar and his rags are well suited to each other. Put good clothes on him and you perforce tie up his supplicatory tongue. If, indeed, the apparel oft proclaims the man, it quite as often helps to make him.

Philip Middleton with his change of clothes was, in a measure, a changed man. Released from the restraints inseparable from

the sedentary life of the office, it seemed as if a burden had been lifted from his shoulders. There came over him, too, a strange consciousness of kinship with the toiling masses whose livery he now wore.

"Here's a new roller to break in, b'ys. He's goin' to spell Waters awhile when he larns the ropes."

This was the way Superintendent Mitchell introduced Philip to the men at the rolls. The breaking in of a roller was not an uncommon thing, and the only matter for surprise to all of them except Waters was the newness of Philip's attire throughout and the fairness of his skin, which showed that he had not come from among the men in the mill, but from the outside, and was, therefore, wholly raw to mill work. Such an one is quite likely to be made the butt of some rough but usually good-natured gibing by his fellow workmen. But if he has sufficient self-command to keep his temper, and wit enough to hold his own at a give-and-take, he will get along well enough.

Philip's initiation in the mills was attended by a certain amount of this somewhat inelegant gibing. He took it all in good part, however, and usually managed to give back

a little better than was sent, which, in any company, is always a passport to favor.

He proved an apt pupil at the rolls, making rapid progress under the sympathetic coaching of Waters and the no less helpful hints of his companion roller.

The last mentioned individual, Tom Tenwick by name, was a man who had always had the misfortune, like many another, to be taken at his "face value." This placed him at a great disadvantage, for his features presented more than the little strangeness in the proportion which according to Francis Bacon characterizes all excellent beauty. His face was long and thin, the forehead high and narrow. His eyes were turned inward, seemingly focusing their gaze upon his nose, which modest member embarrassed, apparently, by such unremittent scrutiny, was suffused with an abiding blush. The oblique cast of the eyes heightened a certain indefinable look of vacancy in the countenance which usually attends an abeyance of some mental faculty. And Tenwick did afford some excuse to his associates who were wont to tap their heads significantly when they spoke of him; for he had one grave fault, or defect of character—and was it not a

defect?—he reversed the usual confusion as to *meum* and *tuum*. He never could keep anything for himself that any one else seemed to need. This guileless generosity frequently made him the dupe of those ubiquitous parasites who live by exploiting their fellows of lesser wit. Tenwick's wages were continually being attached on garnishment process to answer to some claim that had its origin in this unfortunate disposition of his to give everybody else the best of it.

Under the operation of the law of the survival of the fittest (shrewdest?) such men as Tenwick have a sorry time of it. But when that wretched fiction shall give way to a higher social law of charity, patience, kindness and helpfulness, how many arid human wastes will be reclaimed to flower and fruitage!

John Waters remained with Philip sharing the work and coaching him until Wednesday of the week following.

"I guess you can go it alone now," he then said to him; and giving him his number to hand to the time-keeper, he left the mill.

Waters's confidence was justified, for Philip handled the heated bars in a way that elicited from Tenwick the sufficient compliment:

"Waters couldn't 'a done that any better."

A little before six o'clock the last pile from the furnace was put through the rolls. Philip then put aside the grappling-tongs and joined the line passing by the time-keeper's window.

"Number 29," he called out cheerily as he pushed in his number.

"29," echoed the time-keeper. "Check."

CHAPTER VIII

An Introduction under Peculiar Circumstances

Leaving the mill Philip returned to his dressing-room in the office building, put off the garb of "No. 29," took a bath-tub plunge, gave himself a vigorous rub down, put on his customary attire, and emerged from the building, again Mr. Philip Middleton, Assistant Secretary of the Ellerton Iron & Steel Works.

How much better he felt, though, than when leaving his desk to throw himself into the soft, luxurious seat of the waiting carriage! The three hours' work in the mills was of right quantity to send healthfully coursing his hitherto sluggish blood, and to give him that grateful physical feeling which comes from bodily powers active, not dormant.

The mills marked the terminus of Ellerton's one street car line, passenger traffic to and from the mills having warranted the extension of the line out to that point.

By taking the car, therefore, Philip was

enabled to reach home in good time for dinner.

He was coming now to enjoy his dinners, too; and good digestion waited upon his appetite.

"Hunger is the best sauce," says an old proverb. So, also, manual labor—in moderate amount—is one of the best of appetizers.

Philip's physical rejuvenation brought with it an access of animal spirits which put him on good terms with himself and everybody else.

"Has she said 'yes'?" Edith asked him one evening, noting his good humor.

"Not for publication," he answered, playfully giving her ear a pinch. "I wish, though, that you'd say 'no' to half a dozen or so of your admirers so that we shouldn't be eternally interrupted at our cribbage."

Edith looked up archly. "Is that quite complimentary to me, sir, to think that I could get rid of them so easily? A young lady's 'no' isn't supposed to mean anything. Give me a more effectual way.'

"I will, for to-night, if you will be good enough to take it. You're 'not at home'."

"Well! Well!" interjected Mrs. Middleton. "He is conventional for once, isn't

he? This is such a rare thing with him, Edith, that you'd better encourage him."

"Conventional!" thought Philip. "What'll she say when she learns of my very unconventional proceeding at the mills?"

She was soon to know of it—as was the whole town for that matter. Philip had intended, on his father's return, to take him into his confidence and talk the matter over fully with him; and he made no doubt that he should succeed in winning him over to acquiescence in the arrangement he had made, if not to an approval of it.

It will be seen how the first interview tallied with his expectations.

The main object of Mr. Middleton's trip South was to secure, if possible, a large steel-rail contract with the St. L. I. M. & S. Railroad Co. That company had commenced the construction of a branch line, and was about to place the order for the rails.

Mr. Middleton had a favorable conference with the officials of the road at St. Louis. Returning to that city after a few days spent in New Orleans, he had a further interview with Mr. Elridge, the president of the road; and as that official was about to start for Chicago, he took the train with him and

prevailed upon him to stop over at Ellerton until the night train for the North, that he might visit the mills and make a personal inspection of the company's rails.

Mr. Elridge was accompanied by his daughter who was going to visit with friends in Chicago.

The train arrived at Ellerton at 3.30 p.m. Mr. Middleton took his guests direct to the mills, stopping long enough in town, however, to get Mr. Hartland, president of the Commercial Bank, who was the vice-president of the rolling mill company and, next to Mr. Middleton, the heaviest stockholder.

Mr. Hartland's son, George, and Mr. Munson, the editor and proprietor of the *Ellerton Argus*, who happened to be in the bank at the time, also joined the party.

Mr. Munson was also a stockholder in the mills. He owned two shares (par value one hundred dollars). The impression prevailed, however, that he had a much greater proprietary interest. For this impression Mr. Munson was himself largely responsible. In speaking of the mills he invariably used the first person plural of the personal pronoun. "We did a big business last year," he would say; "but it looks as if we'd break the record

this year." "It's going to make us hump to fill the orders we now have on hand." "We shall have to enlarge our plant considerably very soon and increase our working force." Etc.

But this was a perfectly harmless conceit of Mr. Munson's, and the mill officials suffered him gladly. As editor of the *Argus* he was in a position to keep the mills in the public eye and to cultivate a favorable public opinion. He was a man of rather heavy wit himself, but he had a very talented wife, and this doubtless accounted for the fact that the *Argus* was a uniformly well-edited paper. His connubial good fortune was the more remarkable from the fact that his intellectual deficiencies were in no way made up for by personal attractiveness. He was short and fat, with a full-moon face and bald pate. He had a waddling gait, and a wheezy voice sounded out his ponderous platitudes. Mr. Munson was, in short, a type of that not altogether useless individual whose unconscious mission in life is to give pleasure to those who are blessed with a sense of humor.

Mr. Middleton arrived at the mills with his visitors shortly after four o'clock. Mr.

Cosgrove, the secretary and treasurer of the company, had gone home. Mr. Middleton was less disappointed at this, however, than in not finding Philip in the office, for he had intended to have him join the party in the tour of the mills. His disappointment would have been keener had he not reflected that he would have the opportunity to present his son to Mr. Elridge and his daughter at dinner.

He now led the way into the mills. Superintendent Mitchell was sent for, and under his guidance Mr. Middleton and his company began the rounds of the mill.

Now Philip, as usual, had relieved John Waters at three o'clock, and was at this time busy at the rolls. This, of course, Mitchell knew, and he was plainly embarrassed when he was called upon to conduct Mr. Middleton's party through the mill. At the time, this embarrassment was attributed (by Mr. Munson) to a natural diffidence in the presence of such distinguished visitors. He soon regained his composure, however, as the humorous possibilities of an expected event began to appeal to him.

They soon came around to the rolls. Philip was putting a steel bar through the rolls

"Well if it isn't Phil Middleton!"

with his back turned to the approaching party. When he had passed the bar through the last roll and sent it on to the finishers, he wheeled about to take his position for another round, and found himself face to face with the goodly company.

"Well, if it isn't Phil Middleton!" cried young Hartland in open-eyed wonder.

Philip, for a moment, looked like one who has been apprehended *flagrante delicto*. But it would have taken a deft artist to have caught the expressions of surprise, chagrin, anger and mortification which chased themselves across the face of Mr. Middleton as he stood aghast at this astounding situation.

What! his son—the son of the president of the company in workman's clothes toiling and sweating with common hands in the mill! Preposterous!

Turning angrily to Mitchell he said:

"What nonsense is this, Mitchell? Are you so short of men that you must make drafts upon the office force?"

Mitchell laughed. His Irish sense of humor had been aroused which prevented his seeing any but the funny side of the situation, and made him not indisposed to draw out the joke. At the same time a slight feeling of

resentment at the disparagement of his co-workers in the mill, implied in Mr. Middleton's tone, may have inclined him to "rub it in" on him. Drawing himself up he said:

"Well, sir, we're always on the lookout for good min, and this young feller is as likely a hand at the rolls as we've had in many a day. I dunno why he applied for the job—ye'll have to ask him that." And Mitchell waved his hand toward Philip like one shifting all further responsibility.

"This is all my doing, father," said Philip, who had now recovered himself. "I felt the need of exercise and this is my way of getting it. I am drawing on one of the men here who has plenty to spare. I take his place at the rolls from three to six in the afternoon; and what benefits me to gain benefits him to lose. It's at no sacrifice of my office work, either, as Mr. Cosgrove will probably tell you. This is hardly the time or the place that I should have chosen to let you know about the experiment, but things don't always go according to program. Still, there is nothing in this that I am ashamed of, and nothing, either, of which you need be ashamed."

The countenances of the listeners expressed various emotions. Mr. Hartland turned to-

ward Mr. Middleton a face in which cold cynicism was mixed with commiseration. Mr. Munson stood as if transfixed, in a hopeless daze. His slow-moving mental processes finally brought him around to a consciousness of the situation, and turning to Miss Elridge, who stood at his side, he said with the tone and manner of one imparting information:

"It's his son—Mr. Middleton's son."

"Yes, I know," she said, repressing with difficulty a laugh at Mr. Munson's expense.

Mr. Elridge, during Philip's recital, had stood with hand supporting his chin, a merry twinkle in his eye and a look of interest and amusement on his face, which anon changed to one of pensive melancholy as he thought of his own son, lost to him years ago, just as he was ripening into manhood, and who evinced much of the same ingenuous spirit as did the young man who stood before him.

When Philip finished speaking, Mr. Elridge turned to Mr. Middleton and said:

"Mr. Middleton, will you honor me with an introduction to your son?"

"The honor must certainly be his if you seek an introduction under the present circumstances," said Mr. Middleton, somewhat mollified by Mr. Elridge's attitude.

"Philip, this is Mr. Elridge, the president of the St. Louis & Iron Mountain road, who is visiting us for a few hours."

Mr. Elridge grasped Philip's hand before he had a chance to remove his coarse working-glove, and shook it heartily. Then, still retaining hold of his hand he drew him forward and presented him to his daughter.

Philip lifted his workman's cap and bowed.

"Miss Elridge must certainly regard apologies as superfluous."

"They are quite unnecessary, Mr. Middleton," she replied with a winning smile.

"Now, Mr. Middleton," said Mr. Elridge to Philip, "you must not let us interrupt your work. We came especially to see the steel-rail rolling. It will now have an added interest."

"Very well," said Philip. "There are a few more bars in the furnace we are now working, and we are at your service until they are disposed of."

The astonishment of the mill workers on discovering that they had been for the past fortnight entertaining the president's son unawares, may be imagined; and one or two who had been rather caustic in their badgering of the "green hand" thought they had

a fair prospect of getting their "time" without asking for it. How little they knew Philip Middleton!

The heaters and haulers were now signalled, and the buggy came on with its heated freight. Philip and Tenwick received it at their stations and put the metal on its course through the rolls.

Philip Middleton never appeared to better advantage—not even when pulling an oar with his college crew—than now, as with feet firmly planted and muscles tense he held the swaying metal in obedience to his will. Six feet he stood, broad shouldered and broad chested and large of limb. A young Hercules he appeared, or more properly, perhaps, a Vulcan induing his metallic creation with seeming life as it crackled and squirmed through the compressing rolls.

Truly, the glory of young men is their strength!

Mr. Middleton's paternal pride must at that moment have triumphed over any mortification he felt at finding his son in the present embarrassing position.

One eye in that company certainly followed Philip's movements admiringly. There is an irresistible and doubtless perfectly natural

attraction to the feminine mind in the contemplation of manly strength. This has its counterpart in man's predilection for the essentially feminine.

Miss Elridge turned her eyes from Philip for a moment to let them rest upon young Hartland who stood beside her. He looked like a manikin compared with the stalwart form at the rolls.

Young Hartland went quite wide of the mark in his interpretation of her look, for his lip curled contemptuously as he said:

"Absurd, isn't it?"

"Do you think so?" she said. "I think it's grand!"

"Oh, well, perhaps it is in a way," he replied, in a lame attempt to retrieve himself.

The last bar had now been put through the roughing rolls.

"That finishes this furnace," said Philip. "It will be fifteen or twenty minutes before the next one is ready. I don't suppose you will want to wait for that."

"Ye nadn't ather," said Mitchell to Philip. "I'll take care of the last furnace for ye; an' I guess ye don't mind much if I do," giving him a sly wink.

"All right. Thanks!" said Philip with a

laugh of appreciation at Mitchell's perspicacity.

Then excusing himself he went to his dressing-room, removed his working clothes, took his customary bath, dressed, and joined the party back to town.

CHAPTER IX

In which Philip Proposes a New Fad for those who have the Time for it

Mr. Elridge and his daughter dined with the Middletons.

Naturally enough, the talk turned to a discussion of the incident at the mills, in spite of Mrs. Middleton's efforts to divert it into other and, to her, more agreeable channels. She had been completely dumfounded when she heard of the disgraceful plight (for such she considered it) in which Philip was found. In her view, indeed, the thing was so utterly "outré" as to call for the same reticence that would have been maintained had he been guilty of some moral delinquency. She was mortified that the occasion of entertaining distinguished company should be marred by such an untoward occurrence, and she regarded the apparent approval with which Mr. Elridge and his daughter looked upon Philip's conduct as nothing more than the ordinary courtesy of guests

who forbear the expression of their real sentiments lest they give pain to their hosts.

Oh, well! he was not her own son, was her consoling reflection. She would not hold herself responsible for his vagaries, nor be an apologist for them. Let Mr. Middleton see to it. She would look out for her daughter; and she was confident that her influence over her would be great enough, at all events, to keep her from making herself ridiculous.

Edith Middleton did not take the matter so seriously. When Philip came downstairs and into the drawing-room she seized him by the shoulders and shook him after the manner of imperious sisters, exclaiming:

"You funny, funny boy! What will you do next?"

"Nothing, I hope, that you'll not approve," said Philip, giving her a playful pat on the cheek.

Mr. Middleton, too, when he became convinced that the chances of supplying Mr. Elridge's company with the steel rails it needed had not been imperilled by the episode at the mills, was disposed to look at the affair with greater tolerance. It was simply a piece of extravagance on the part of a young man who had always evinced an uncon-

ventional habit of thought and action. His enthusiasm would soon abate when his common sense revealed to him the absurdity of the thing he was doing. And a little good-humored raillery, Mr. Middleton thought, would be more likely to bring him to his senses than would an attitude of pronounced disapproval.

He therefore renewed the subject by saying to Mr. Elridge with a wave of his hand toward Philip as the latter seated himself:

"The illustrious Don Quixote has still some followers."

"Your son will hardly admit being one of them, I imagine," replied Mr. Elridge smiling.

"Oh, no, of course not," said Mr. Middleton. "He's as serious about this tomfoolery at the mills as the old Don was with his windmills—and just as ridiculous. Here is a young man who says he needs exercise. There are a dozen good and sensible ways in which he can get it. He has his dumb-bells, his Indian clubs, his punching-bag and bars. He has a good horse. If he needs a vacation he can take it. But he puts aside all the means that are suited to his station, and, in cap and blouse, places himself on a level with the ordinary mill hand. He gets

exercise, it may be, but he pays an absurd and unnecessary price for it."

"Instead of cap and blouse, say cap and bells," said Mrs. Middleton sarcastically; "for he will make himself the laughing-stock of the whole town."

"His way of getting exercise is certainly an unusual one, but perhaps he can justify it," said Mr. Elridge, looking at Philip encouragingly.

"Well," said Philip, "to my mind to go into the mills in cap and blouse and turn out a steel rail that will be of some use isn't nearly so absurd as to don a sweater and have a make-believe fight with a punching-bag or make a monkey of myself on a horizontal bar. Taking gymnastic exercise is like beating the air. There is something perfunctory about it that in a great measure defeats the very end sought. Exercise, to be of any great value, must enlist the mind pleasurably. And this productive manual labor does, because it is creative as well as bodily exercising. It seems to me, therefore, that I have adopted the most rational way of getting exercise. It may be an unusual way, but, when looked at fairly, there's nothing particularly absurd or quixotic about it. I venture

to say that nine men out of ten who are engaged in sedentary occupations would do the same thing if they consulted their own inclinations. They would be glad to exchange their pens for the carpenter's hammer and saw or the mason's trowel for a couple of hours every day. And if they would do that, and relieve some overworked laborers for that length of time each day, they and the workmen whom they relieved would be alike greatly benefited."

"Oh, yes, it would be mighty fine, I have no doubt," said Mr. Middleton, "if people could drop their work and go out and play, like children at recess. But we usually stop making mud pies when we leave off our pinafores."

"Something might be said in favor of a continuance of the mud-pie habit," replied Philip; "but it would hardly appeal to the utilitarian spirit of these times."

"But a change of work such as you suggest would hardly be practicable generally, would it?" said Mr. Elridge.

"Not generally, of course, without a radical change in business conditions and methods. But with a certain class in the community the thing would be perfectly feasible. Those

who by reason of inherited or acquired wealth have their time pretty much at their own disposal, could spend a portion of it to no better purpose than in relieving some workman at his daily task."

"I don't suppose you see anything incongruous in men of wealth and refinement consorting with vulgar workmen," said Mrs. Middleton contemptuously.

"Put the same kind of clothes on them and the incongruity will not be so very glaring," replied Philip. "True refinement is not the exclusive possession of the well-to-do. Many of them have acquired a certain amount of over-refinement that a few hours' daily association with the working classes might help them to rub off."

"That's all very well in theory," said Edith; "but how many men of real refinement do you suppose would be able to overcome a natural repugnance to associating with people of different tastes and ideals?"

"Oh, I'm not contending for intimate companionship," said Philip, "which, of course, is something that demands like tastes and ideals, and which, by the way, a person of refinement might find among the poorer classes, and fail to find among the well-to-do.

What I have in mind is that sort of human fellowship that the Founder of Christianity stood for. It will not be contended, I imagine, that He lived any the less His own saintly life because He sat down with publicans and sinners. And yet, a great many who, one day in seven, recite His precepts with the greatest unction, in their daily lives treat a large mass of their fellows as social pariahs, to be shunted off with a 'Good Lord, deliver us!'"

A momentary silence ensued upon Philip's last words; such a silence as usually marks the reception of an unpalatable truth.

It was broken by Philip. His face, which had just borne a serious and somewhat stern expression, relaxed, and with a slight laugh he said:

"Excuse me, I didn't intend to preach a sermon. My proposition needs no appeal to religion or philanthropy, and it shouldn't be discredited by any pharisaic pietism which recognizes a duty and perfunctorily performs it. I contend, simply, that if those who have a considerable margin of time would spend two or three hours of it daily in the way I have suggested, they themselves would be as much benefited as the workmen whom

they relieve."

"And they should render their services gratuitously?" Mr. Middleton asked.

"Certainly. It would only be a species of restitution, anyway. For the leisure classes owe their leisure in great measure to the working classes."

"This is interesting," said Miss Elridge who up to this time had been a quiet listener. "If I were a man I believe I would give your plan a trial. It seems to me it would be lots of fun."

"If that sort of thing would amuse you," said Philip smiling, "your sex needn't stand in the way. You might learn type-writing, and occasionally take the place of some office girl."

There was a general laugh at this.

"Well," said Philip, "I don't believe Miss Elridge would be half as much bored as she is at many of the matinées she goes to."

"Nor so much as the girl's employer would be with my work," said Miss Elridge laughing.

"He shouldn't be bored in any event," said Philip gallantly; "and as to the merit of your performance, it must be remembered that in that kind of work intelligence counts for more than mere dexterity. The latter is

purely mechanical and can be easily acquired."

"Really, you encourage me, Mr. Middleton," said Miss Elridge playfully.

"I am afraid you would need a great deal of encouragement before attempting such a thing," said Philip with a laugh.

"And yet, why not?" he continued half seriously. "You young women are in a better position for that sort of thing than most of us men. You have a superabundance of time, and your ingenuity, you must confess, is constantly taxed in finding ways to take it up. Now, here is a good way for you to dispose of a portion of it. Here is a fad for you that will be worth your while. There is a multitude of girls in offices, department stores and other places, whose strength is heavily taxed by long hours of unremitting work. They would gladly let you have their places for two or three hours every day, or even occasionally. You would enjoy the work, and, it is needless to say, the working girls would enjoy the vacation."

"I think we can find enough for our girls to do without degrading them in that manner," said Mrs. Middleton with ill-concealed disgust.

"Useful work can never degrade any one,"

returned Philip with just a touch of asperity in his tone; "and our young women might much better put in a part of their superfluous time in such work than waste it all upon nerve-wrecking frivolities, as many of them now do. Take the case of the average young society woman. If she were honest with herself she would have to admit that her life is rather empty. And it is so simply because it lacks any serious purpose. She has recourse to all manner of diversions—many of them frivolous and unhealthful. She takes up every new fad, no matter how inane it may be, in a futile attempt to fill up the void in her life. Sometimes she mounts a hobby, which she will ride with the precipitation of a Jehu, and delude herself with the notion that she is doing something and getting somewhere, only to discover later that it is nothing but a hobby and that she has suffered some exhaustion but made no progress. When she marries, she is fortunate if she finds any taste for the commonplace duties of the home, and doesn't still find herself inclined to a restless, unsatisfying hedonism, as fruitless as it is fatuous."

"My, but you're complimentary!" exclaimed Edith.

"Isn't he?" said Miss Elridge.

"And you would remedy this sad state of affairs by having us girls take up a line of relief work similar to your own, would you?" asked Edith.

"Relief work—no," said Philip with a frown. "What did I just say about discrediting this thing by a show of pietism? And here you are killing it with a bad name. Of all humbugs, professed charities are, in my opinion, the worst. Your 'Homes,' 'Helping Hands,' 'Good Samaritan Inns,' and the like capital-lettered institutions, are admirably adapted to take away the last shred of self-respect that may be left to the recipients of their dubious bounty."

"What!" exclaimed Mrs. Middleton. "You certainly do not mean to disparage the work of all of our organized charities, do you?"

"Oh, there is the saving grace of good motives at the bottom of most of them, I admit. And yet, what are they, at best, but makeshifts—organizations to which we delegate duties that we ought to perform ourselves? How many of our eleemosynary institutions do you suppose would have any excuse for existing if every home were a

hospital and every man his brother's keeper?"

"Here, here!" Mr. Middleton interposed. "I thought you were not going to preach?"

"Let him preach," said Mr. Elridge laughing. "The sermon isn't prosy. We sha'n't fall asleep under it."

"Well, the sermon is over," said Philip as the maid here came to announce dinner. "And now I'll present the strongest argument in favor of my plan by showing what an appetite it gives one for dinner."

Mrs. Middleton felt greatly relieved. Released from the restraint imposed upon her by a discussion in which she took little interest, she was enabled to give free play to that tact and resource to which she was indebted for her pre-eminence as a hostess.

"Entertaining," was, indeed, in Mrs. Middleton's estimation one of the fine arts, and was studied by her with all the assiduity of an art devotee. And if she found her inspiration in a supreme regard for the forms and conventions of good usage, and exalted the thing itself above its genial and kindly purpose, she had a large and influential fellowship in those who worship art for art's sake, recognizing no ulterior end beyond the perfection of form, color and perspective,

according to certain well-defined artistic canons.

Philip ably seconded Mrs. Middleton's efforts so far as Miss Elridge was concerned, and it is suspected that industrial and social problems did not engross their attention to the exclusion of other, and, perhaps, equally interesting subjects of conversation. Train time came all too soon for him, and it was only left to him to protract his pleasure by the drive to the station, whither he and his father accompanied their guests.

When Miss Elridge bade Philip good-bye she said with eyes twinkling:

"I think when I get back to St. Louis I will start the new fad that you suggested."

"Good!" replied Philip laughing. "Write me about it when you do."

"All right!" she responded gaily.

But as Philip drove slowly homeward in some depression of spirits, which came as a reaction from the experiences of the day, it occurred to him that he had rested his request to hear from her upon a rather remote contingency.

CHAPTER X

Containing a Brief Description of Two Worthy Persons, and Showing Mr. Elridge's Appreciation of Skilled Labor

In a town the size of Ellerton an event such as has been described, with the added incidents attending its disclosure, was quite of a kind to start the tongues of the Mrs. Grundys, male and female, to vigorous wagging. Not often was such a fine bit of gossip afforded to those who, in a small community, take upon themselves the burden of the daily paper in the dissemination of news. The idea of a young man voluntarily leaving his office desk to take up manual labor during a portion of the day was sufficiently novel in itself. But when that young man belonged to the first family in the town, which might properly be looked to for patterns of regular, orderly and becoming behavior—well! here was something to arouse the interest of the most staid inhabitant. The thing was bandied about until the whole town was agog over it.

And, in certain quarters, Philip did make himself a laughing-stock as Mrs. Middleton had predicted.

George Hartland, having most of his information at first hand, lost no opportunity to retail it, with certain reflections of his own thereon to the general effect that Philip had made a great big fool of himself.

Hartland felt somewhat piqued over Miss Elridge's unfavorable reception of his remark at the mills characterizing Philip's action as absurd. But he consoled himself with the reflection that she and her father had only tried to smooth over a disagreeable situation. For goodness' sake! what else could it be but absurd—working like a day laborer when you didn't have to?

Indeed, to a young man like Hartland the affair could hardly appear in any other light. With him appearances were everything, and should be kept up at all hazards. To him fashion was a fetish, at whose shrine he worshiped devotedly, and to whose slightest behests he was implicitly obedient. The "proper thing" had in him one of the truest of exponents. It was beautiful to see how he exemplified the vogue in the smallest things. For example, in the matter of the salutation

upon meeting a lady acquaintance—one year would see him giving his hat a perpendicular lift; another, bowing his recognition and then ceremoniously lifting his hat after he had passed his acquaintance; and again, giving his hat a quarter-circle sweep which in its mathematical accuracy suggested nothing so much as a pair of bow-compasses.

It is hardly necessary to say that he affected the latest thing in clothes. He was the earliest and the most satisfactory visitor at the leading tailor's establishment when the season's new importations were announced, and no one who kept his eye on him had any occasion for consulting the fashion-plate.

Well, good clothes—fashionable clothes—are splendid things when there is a man inside of them. But, either on the street or in show-windows, they make a poor combination with wax figures.

And yet, Hartland wasn't a bad fellow. Indeed, he was an exceedingly useful member of the community, particularly to the feminine portion. An exemplar of the fashion, an expert dancer, full of the latest gossip, and adept in that light chit-chat which, like the frothy foam upon the water, though without weight, yet shows that the stream is not

stagnant; lavish, too, with his money for the ends of entertainment—all this made him, quite naturally, a considerable factor in the social life of the town. To be sure, he was not a young man to arouse any very deep emotions in the hearts of the fair sex. Neither, on the other hand, was he very impressionable himself, and so was not likely to embarrass his young lady friends by any mawkish ebullitions of sentiment.

Gay, careless, self-indulgent, pleasure-loving and pleasure-seeking, he was a fair type of the young man who is impelled neither by inclination nor necessity to look the world seriously in the face.

Young Hartland, by the grace of his father, held the position of assistant cashier in the Commercial Bank. About the only assistance he rendered, however, was in depleting the bank's exchequer to the extent of a generous salary.

For that matter, though, the other officers of the bank, with the exception of the president, were likewise mere figureheads. It was decidedly a one-man bank, and Mr. Hartland senior was that man. The duties of the other officers were wholly ministerial. The cashier, for instance, affixed his necessary

signature to the bank's paper, and superintended generally the routine monetary transactions of the bank; but he never essayed to make a loan of the bank's funds. Any uninformed person who applied to him for money was promptly referred to the president. The cashier was occasionally consulted in regard to loans, but this was a mere matter of form, and he gave his advice in a perfunctory way and without any feeling of responsibility in the matter, knowing, as he did, how little Mr. Hartland needed advice about loaning money, and how little he would be influenced by any that might be given.

There are men born into the world, seemingly, with a genius for making money, as there are geniuses in other lines of human endeavor; and their successful manipulations are often quite as inexplicable.

Had a phrenologist examined Mr. Hartland's head when he was a babe he would have discovered and doubtless commented on an extraordinary bump of acquisitiveness which his cranium disclosed. This phrenologic organ had suffered no diminution when Mr. Hartland arrived at man's estate. It had, rather, been developed and strengthened by constant exercise of the acquisitive faculty.

As a boy the leadings of this faculty were apparent in the facility with which he would effect a transfer of various belongings from the pockets of the other boys to his own. He early made himself skilled in the marble games of "Boston," "long-taw" and "porto," and so always played "for keeps"; and his less skilful playmates soon found themselves "strapped" in their encounters with him in these fascinating games. Then, with his pockets bulging with his gains, he would sell the marbles back to the boys, inducing them to purchase by offering them at a less price than they would have to pay for them at the stores. He would then proceed to repeat the "strapping" process. The boys, however, were too unsophisticated to see that they were simply paying him tribute for the pleasure of playing the game.

In the wild-fruit season he had surprising information (which he studiously kept to himself) as to the location of the best plum, red-haws and crab-apple trees; and he would frequently appear among the boys with his hat full of the luscious fruit, and having properly whetted their appetites by a display of his "find," he would proceed to distribute it among them—for an adequate consideration.

By such commendable forehandedness, and by paying heed to certain trite economic maxims such as, "The early bird catches the worm," "A penny saved is a penny earned," etc.,—all well calculated to nourish and conserve the acquisitive faculty,—Mr. Hartland was, when he came to take up the serious business of life, more than a match for the average man in the great game of dollar-grabbing, which was at once his work and his sole diversion.

While the workings of genius are usually occult, some of the ways of this genius of finance were not past finding out. For instance, he never made the egregious mistake of mixing sentiment with business. Grace never figured in his dealings except when he recognized the legal three days on maturing obligations. He had an accountable predilection for placing loans where the collateral in hand was ample and the business venture of the borrower precarious. Like a huge spider he would sit in the luxuriously furnished back parlor of the bank and lure the unsuspecting and innocent human flies, and when he had them safely secured in his web he would give free play to his spider instincts.

"I'm not running a charitable institution,"

he was wont to say when an appeal for leniency was made on behalf of his victims. That he wasn't was amply evidenced by the more than respectable amount of tangible property which through frequent executions and foreclosures found its way into his capacious maw.

Well, Mr. Hartland had his reward. He had the dubious distinction of being pointed out as a "rich old codger." There were some, indeed, who went so far as to characterize him (under their breaths) as a skinflint. But these were people so old-fogyish in their ideas as to think that the Golden Rule made a good working basis in business as well as in morals, only to discover how seriously they were handicapped in their dealings with Mr. Hartland by entertaining such antiquated notions.

It may be imagined how a man like Mr. Hartland would look upon a situation such as was disclosed to him at the mills. The absurdity of the thing (and to him it was absurd enough) was a matter of little consequence. Philip might make all kinds of a fool of himself if he chose and arouse neither his interest nor his animadversion. But Mr. Hartland was a heavy stockholder in the mills,

and his cold financial nose scented trouble.

"No good can come of this," he said to Mr. Middleton the next day. "He'll only be putting foolish notions into the heads of the men, and we'll be having trouble with 'em."

One of the foolish notions, doubtless, which Mr. Hartland feared that the men in the mills might perchance come to conceive, was that they were human beings, and not mere "hands," part and parcel of the machinery and material, all working to one definite, proper and (to Mr. Hartland) satisfying end —the production of handsome dividends to the stockholders. Such a notion would, of course, from Mr. Hartland's point of view, be a very dangerous thing. Men of thimble-rigging propensities always rely upon the ignorance of their intended victims. The predatory lords of creation have in all times effected their own security by the inhibition of the tree of knowledge to the masses upon whom they prey. He was a wise man who in the days of Roman slavery objected to the proposition offered in the senate that the slaves should be uniformed. "If you do that," he said, "they will discover their great number and we shall have an insurrection."

In truth, something may be said, and, indeed, has been said, as to the advantages of a condition of ignorance for the masses. To be wise above one's station in life is to be continually fretted with desires that cannot be gratified, and to fume and sweat under impositions that will not be lifted. There is no disturbance of equanimity in being robbed without knowing it, and no rankling and disquieting feelings impelling to reprisals.

Yes, commend our overworked and underpaid toiler, who is inclined to forego the bliss of ignorance and will ask those ugly questions —why he is overworked and underpaid— commend him to the belabored and underfed dray-horse who, if he has any conception about the matter at all, does not connect the underfeeding and belaboring with the volition of his master, but feels them to be inseparable incidents of his condition as a dray-horse.

To a man like Mr. Hartland Philip's entry into the mills might well seem a figurative putting of new wine into old bottles, to be followed by like consequences; and he even went so far as to expostulate with Mr. Middleton, urging him to put a stop to such foolishness.

Mr. Middleton quite agreed with him as to the foolishness of Philip's action, but he was also wise enough to see that the exercise of any positive veto authority in the matter would be equally foolish. The most cordial relations had always existed between himself and his son, and he was not disposed to endanger them by thwarting any of his son's plans so long as his own purposes were not crossed.

Of course, he discussed the matter with Philip and tried to dissuade him from further continuing his absurd course; but finding him determined to do so, and not without a good defence of it in a pronounced betterment of his physical condition and in the increased efficiency of his office work, he waved the matter aside with a "Oh, well, go ahead. You'll get tired of it soon enough anyway."

And so Philip went on in the even tenor of his way, growing in health and strength and in the knowledge of the iron business. His position was strongly fortified by the following personal letter which his father received from Mr. Elridge about two weeks after that gentleman's visit to Ellerton:

St. Louis, Mo., June 25, 18—
Mr. Edward Middleton,
Pres. Ellerton Iron & Steel Works,
Ellerton———,

My dear Sir:

It gives me great pleasure to write you personally and advise you that we have decided to give your company the contract for furnishing the rails for our branch line. We shall need about 8,000 tons, which quantity please be prepared to furnish upon estimates which will be sent to you from time to time by our Engineer.

We shall also have to erect two bridges on the line, and we shall look to you for the material for these, as well, if we can come to satisfactory terms, as no doubt we can. Our Engineer will send you the bridge plans and specifications.

So far as I have been personally instrumental in securing these contracts for your company I have not been uninfluenced by what I have learned through personal observation about the skilled labor in your mills. I am not much given to superstition in such matters, but I cannot help feeling that good luck will attend the traffic over these rails.

My respects to Mrs. Middleton and Miss

Middleton, and warmest regards to your son, of whom, believe me, you have every reason to be proud.

Very truly yours,
James B. Elridge.

CHAPTER XI

John Waters

Not more marked was the improvement in Philip's health and spirits since taking up the daily work in the mill, than was the change for the better in John Waters. He seemed to have received a generous infusion of the elixir of life into his veins. He walked more erect and with an elastic step. A brightness came into his eye, and the face which had been drawn and marked with the signs of physical exhaustion gradually rounded into fulness and became enlivened by an unwonted animation. His work was no longer the monotonous drudgery of days past, but was taken up with the zest and energy that are enlisted in pleasurable tasks.

This noticeable improvement, however, was not altogether due to release from the high physical tension under which he had been working. It meant much, of course, to have three hours of hard and exacting labor lifted from his shoulders daily, giving, as it did, adequate rest to his heavily taxed muscles.

But there was another important factor in Waters's rejuvenation. He felt the stirrings of the long dormant faculties of his mind. He was awakening to the life of the intellect.

This awakening came late with Waters. Yes, and with many it never comes. All men are, presumably, born with that anatomical conformation known as the brain; and yet, considering the little use the mass of our toilers have for that organ they might just about as well have been born without it.

The immortal Gulliver tells us that in the Academy of Lagado, one of the academicians was busied in preparing a lotion which was to be applied to lambs to prevent the growth of their wool; and that the savant was hopeful of propagating, within a reasonable time, a breed of naked sheep.

Shade of the mighty Swift! Would it be giving too great a reach to thy riotous genius if we attribute to thee a forecasting vision, and interpret this satire as a thrust of thy powerful lance at the present industrial age, in which a merciless imposition and division of labor is developing a race of brainless human automata?

Manifestly, a system which constrains a man, during the most of his waking hours, to

a monotonous round of purely mechanical movements is not likely to develop in that man any great amount of brain power. A man so circumstanced has little material out of which to form ideas. His conversation is not likely to be very animated or varied, but will be as limited in its range as are his daily experiences. You—favored of birth and fortune and with abundant leisure to cultivate the graces and fine amenities of polite society—as you meet such a one trudging stolidly homeward after his day's work, are you not inclined to take note simply of the awkward gait, the doltish, uninformed countenance and the unkempt garb, and to draw your skirts about you as you pass by, forgetting the manner of life he is forced to lead, which makes and keeps him what he is? Were his tread-mill existence yours, how long, think you, would it be before you began to show a degenerating change? Do you think those catchy *bons mots* would continue to drop so easily from your lips? Would you not become a little less resourceful in argument—somewhat halting in repartee?

By the sentence of no court of justice, but by as coercive a decree of fate, John Waters

had been condemned to hard labor from his earliest years. He had hardly familiarized himself with the rudiments of an education before he was called upon, by the death of his father, to be the mainstay of the numerous "hostages to fortune" which that parent had left behind him in lieu of a marketable inheritance. Since that time Waters's life had been a life of toil—hard, continuous and, for the most part, ill paid. Released in time from his filial obligations he contracted others more immediately his own by getting married. Of course, this was an economic blunder—justly so rated by those who are in the business of developing human machines, and who, as an incident of that process, adjust the wage scale on a unit basis.

No—to answer the inevitable query—Waters, in his early working years, had not wanted those wise admonitions to industry, honesty, frugality and economy—those illusive finger-posts to success which are set up with such confidence by those who are in the habit of formulating rules from exceptional cases, and who do not see that a soulless, conscienceless commercialism is stretching the toiling masses upon a Procrustean bed of greed, little recking whether the individual

toiler is longer or shorter by reason of the presence or absence of the aforesaid virtues.

Waters, certainly—like many another—must have felt the mocking irony of such admonitions in the face of multiplying necessities and an inadequate wage.

Hard manual labor having thus been his continuous portion, small wonder that Waters's thoughts should have traveled little beyond the scope of his exacting employment, and that he should have come to recognize such a restricted sphere as his station in life, to which—as it would have pleased some to say—he had been called, and wherewith he should be content.

Contented he was, in a way. There is a fortunate capacity in every one for adjustment to the conditions under which he lives. Let them be ever so hard and restrictive, one will get accustomed to them and go along under them in a sort of lethargic contentment, not unlike the ox over the furrow—in slow, swaying and measured step, little heeding the pricking goad, nor much accelerating the pace on account of it. But as the ox is rather primitive in agriculture and is giving place to more improved agencies, so, may we hope, there will be a decreasing number

of his human prototypes in mill and factory and mine, plodding their monotonous, mechanical and deadening course, with faculties and capacities for a fuller and higher life lying latent and unused.

A revelation of this higher life had now come to Waters. He may have had glimpses of it before. He may have been conscious of the great disparities of condition between the rich and the poor; of opportunities and privileges enjoyed by the one and denied to the other. But such a consciousness aroused in him no envious feelings. The life of the well-to-do seemed foreign to him. A great gulf stretched between that and his own. In his mind, and in his experience as well, that life was antagonistic to his own. It was not for him nor for his children; nor did he look for any droppings therefrom to fall upon the parched and arid wastes of his own life to render it more fruitful.

But what were his thoughts now, under the influence of this new and strange experience with Philip Middleton? Here was the son of the president of the mill company (a huge concern in whose vast industrial purposes Waters had felt his own individuality swallowed up like a chip upon an impelling

flood), a young man with all the privileges and immunities of wealthy station, taking upon himself for a time the obligations of humble toil, and, by so much, lifting the burden from another less favored of fortune. Here, indeed, was a light from a higher and richer life coming, not as it had seemed to Waters to come before—like forked flashes from the angry clouds, threatening and sinister—but with a mellow and illumining glow. It stole into Waters's heart, warming it into new and more generous pulsations and melting down the encrusted cynicism which the hard conditions of his life had engendered. Hope and aspiration, feeble in their first flickerings, grew apace, and the benumbed and sleeping faculties of his being awakened to conscious life.

One thing troubled John Waters. He felt that he was getting a great benefit without giving anything in return. True, Philip had disclaimed any altruistic motive. It was for his own good as well as for that of Waters that he had taken up the mill work. But, being the grateful beneficiary of the experiment, Waters was not disposed to draw any fine distinctions as to Philip's motives in entering upon it. He was anxious to do

something not only to show his appreciation of Philip's kindness, but to make some return for it.

What could he do?

In pondering this question an idea occurred to him. In the course of his time in the mills he had seen a number of improvements introduced in the machinery and appliances. These had been invented by some one. Why could he not invent something of sufficient novelty and utility to warrant its introduction into the mills? Here was an objective point toward which to direct his awakened mental faculties; an objective point, too, that lay in the direction of the least resistance, for he was naturally of a mechanical turn of mind. Should he succeed in inventing something of value, it would require intelligent effort and some money to bring the invention into use. Here he could enlist Philip's assistance and have him share with him the avails of the invention. And so, from a purely worldly point of view, Philip's experiment would be justified.

This idea once conceived took possession of Waters and became to him a controlling purpose. What success he met with belongs to a subsequent chapter of this narrative.

CHAPTER XII

A Meeting of the Union

"Your card, sir," demanded brusquely a short, stocky man of Philip one day as he was sitting in the mill resting, after having finished with one of the furnaces.

"My card? What do you mean?" asked Philip in surprise.

"Your workman's union card," said the man. "This is a union mill, and all workmen should have their cards showing them to be in good standing in the union. I am the business agent of the union, and it is my duty to look after this matter. Here is my card."

Philip took the card and read:

Isaac H. Battles,
Business Agent, Local Union No. 45,
Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers.

"H'm! Well, I have no card, Mr. Battles, as I am not a member of the union. My name is Middleton. You've heard how I happen to be here at work, haven't you?"

"Yes, I know who you are, Mr. Middleton,

and how you came to be working here. That may make a difference, and it may not. As I said before, this is a union mill, and only union men are supposed to be employed in it. The circumstances of your case are rather peculiar, and I shall, therefore, take no responsibility in the matter myself, but refer it to the union at the next meeting."

So saying, the man made an entry in his memorandum-book, bowed curtly to Philip, and left him to ponder upon a new phase of the situation.

In calling upon Philip, Mr. Battles had not acted upon his own initiative. Mr. Hartland had put a flea in that gentleman's ear which had found congenial lodgment in his sufficiently ample auricular appendage. For reasons already stated, Mr. Hartland looked with disfavor upon Philip's continuing his mill work. In his eyes it could lead to nothing but trouble. Already, in fact, Philip had used his influence in securing certain betterments in the mill which had added to the convenience and comfort of the men. Small and perhaps insignificant as these were, in themselves, they showed the probable drift and effect of Philip's close touch with conditions in the mill, and foreshadowed, in

Mr. Hartland's mind, other and more radical innovations which, from his point of view, would be utterly subversive of the proper management of the mills.

Not succeeding by his expostulations with Mr. Middleton in getting Philip drawn off from the mill work, Mr. Hartland hit upon other means by which he thought to accomplish his purpose.

A strong local union among the mill workers —having a close affiliation with the national organization of mill workers—with a view to ultimate control of the conditions of employment in the mills, had for some time been directing its energies toward unionizing the mills—bringing all the mill workmen into the union. This had now been virtually accomplished—generally through the voluntary compliance of the workmen, although sometimes through various methods of coercion that were used against recalcitrants. So that it was now a recognized rule that only union men should be tolerated in the mills.

It is needless to say that Mr. Hartland had no sympathy with the union, and whatever concessions had been made to it by the company in the several clashes which had occurred between the union and the company,

had been involuntary so far as he was concerned. But he now thought he could use the union to further his own purposes. Philip's case was a technical violation of the rule as to non-union men, and Mr. Hartland proceeded quietly to set the union by the ears about it.

Meeting Mr. Battles on the street one day, he said to him:

"Well, I see you are letting down the bars a little in the mill as to non-union men."

"How so?" asked Battles, pricking up his ears.

"Young Middleton isn't a member of the union, is he?" said Mr. Hartland, his lips parting slightly with one of his peculiar, covert smiles.

"No, he isn't," replied Battles with a short laugh. "That may be letting down the bars. I hadn't thought of that, and I don't suppose any of the men have."

"Perhaps not," said Mr. Hartland; "but it's funny you haven't. You fellows are such sticklers for union men in the mills that I have been surprised that a committee hasn't waited on the company before this to make a protest against Middleton's working there. Well, it's no affair of mine," he added

carelessly, and went on his way up the street.

But he felt confident that he had hooked his fish.

And he had. Battles had taken the bait greedily.

"Why, it's as plain as a pikestaff," he said to himself after a little thought. "I wonder it didn't occur to me before."

Anyone who knew Mr. Battles might well have wondered at this, also. He was not a man to minimize the importance and responsibility of his position as business agent of the mill workers' union. Pretty much of a martinet in the exercise of his authority, he was given to straining out the gnat—without, however (to do him justice), going to the other extreme of swallowing the camel. It tickled his vanity, also, to now have an opportunity to display his authority in the presence of a person of such importance as the son of the company's president.

His call upon Philip in the mill was for the purpose of making a case for presentation to the union. Having convinced himself, without much difficulty, that Philip's case was a violation of the union rule as to the employment of men in the mills, he proceeded to disseminate his views among the workmen.

Nor did Mr. Hartland stop with Battles. He inoculated a few of the other leading spirits in the union with the same virus; but in such a way as to draw no attention to himself, or leave a suspicion that he had any motive or interest in the matter one way or the other. So that by the time the union met a considerable sentiment had been aroused unfavorable to Philip's longer working in the mills.

Regular meetings of the union were held twice a month on the top floor of one of the large business blocks in town. On this night the prospect of a sensational feature in the proceedings brought out an attendance that completely filled the spacious hall. There was a hush of expectancy when Mr. Battles, in the regular order, arose to make his report.

"Mr. President," he said, bowing ceremoniously to the chairman and then casting a sweeping and consequential look over the assembly, "it becomes my duty as business agent of the union to report to the union an infraction, or at all events, what I consider an infraction, of the rule as to the employment of men in the mills. There is at present at work in the mills during a portion of the day a man without a union card. The chair

and members of the union present doubtless know to whom I have reference. It is Philip Middleton, the son of the president of the mill company, who, in the pursuit of a singular notion of his own, takes the place of one of the rollers in the mills for half the afternoon of each day. Without in any way desiring to criticize or disparage that young man's motives or purposes in doing what he does, I must, having the interests of the union at heart, and in the performance of my duty as its business agent, report his case as a violation of our established rule. I do not think that it would have been beyond the scope of my authority as business agent to have myself notified Mr. Middleton to either get a union card or stop working in the mill. But, as I said to him, the circumstances of his case were so peculiar that I would take no responsibility in the matter, but would refer it to the union. The circumstances are, indeed, peculiar, and both on this account and because of the relations which this gentleman sustains to the company, it has seemed to me that any action taken in the matter should be on motion of the union and with the weight of its sanction. I do now, therefore, refer the matter to the union for its action; but, believ-

ing, as I do, that notwithstanding the peculiar circumstances, the case presents a plain violation of the rule that only union men should be permitted to work in the mills, I must couple my report with the recommendation that we notify Mr. Middleton that he must join the union if he wishes to continue his work in the mills."

A confused murmur of mingled assent and dissent succeeded Mr. Battles's report. The president rapped for order.

"This is an important matter," he said, "and may be fraught with serious and far-reaching consequences to the union. The chair hopes, therefore, that there will be a general and informal discussion of the matter before any definite action is taken in regard to it."

Tom Tenwick took the floor. Tom was a regular attendant upon the meetings of the union, and a frequent, if not always a brilliant speaker. He sought to dignify his appearance on these occasions by a long frock coat which he wore buttoned up close to his throat and the skirts of which he was noticeably careful to draw aside when he sat down. In the frequently heated discussions of the union it was amusing to see Tom jump up repeatedly,

hurl forth a few words pertinent or impertinent to the subject under discussion, and then throw his hands behind him, grasp his coat-tails, throw them out at right angles to his person and settle into his seat, not unlike a bird that spreads its wings in a descent from a lofty perch.

Tom had been very much wrought up over the movement directed toward the coercion of Philip. In the short time that Philip had worked with him at the rolls Tom had become very much attached to him. He looked forward each day to his coming with pleasurable anticipation; for while Philip did not actually shorten the hours of labor for him as for Waters, he none the less shortened them, for the afternoon hours slipped by rapidly when he was there. An atmosphere of cheer, of hope and of good-will seemed to be diffused, and Tom's simple, open and generous nature responded readily to the influence.

Were these pleasant relations to be now disturbed by a few busybodies who would push a salutary rule to tyrannous and illogical lengths? Tom's choler rose steadily while Battles was speaking. He hardly waited for the president to finish his announcement

before he was on his feet. Directing a withering look at Battles—which, however, went wide of its mark, owing to the obliquity of Tom's vision—he launched forth in a vehement harangue that was not altogether pointless although leaving considerable to be desired in the way of rhetorical finish.

"What foolishness is this here!" he cried in a shrill voice which feeling had pitched into a high key. "Ain't our business agent got enough to do without goin' round spyin' out mares' nests? And hain't we got nothin' better to do than to run after 'im like a lot o' chickens after a scratchin' hen?"

Mr. Battles here rose to object to such personal remarks.

"Don't be personal in your remarks, Mr. Tenwick," cautioned the president, repressing a disposition to smile.

"Well, I don't want to hurt no feelin's," continued Tom with a look toward Battles which very much belied his words, "but if it comes to bein' personal, ain't this whole business personal? Somebody's at the bottom o' this thing that's got a dull ax he wants to grind; for there ain't no sense in it. What do we want men to join the union fur? Ain't it so's we won't get a lot o' men in the

mills who won't act with us, an' who'll be cuttin' under us on wages an' drivin' us out o' work? Is Philip Middleton goin' to do that? Yes, he is drivin' one of our men out o' work, but who's got any objection to the way he's doin' it? He's short'nin' his work without short'nin' his pay. Is that goin' to hurt the union any? I wish a lot more o' those young fellers in the office would take the same kind of a notion into their heads. Would anybody be hurt by it? An' what difference would it make whether they joined the union or not? I wouldn't have no objection to their joinin' if they wanted to. I certainly ain't got no objection to Mr. Middleton's joinin' the union if he wants to. I wish he would. But I don't want to see him hauled in with a halter.

"Furthermore, and what's more and besides all that," continued Tom, falling into a tautologous verbiage that must have been suggested to him by the numerous legal papers which had been served upon him—"ain't Philip Middleton already, and long since and before this, legally, lawfully and rightly a member of this union?

"I say," he reiterated, evidently enamoured of these sonorous, if somewhat synonymous

adverbs, "legally, lawfully, and rightly Philip Middleton is now, and for some time past has been a member of this union."

After making this startling statement Tom made a pause and slowly turned his face about the room: an oratorical device which at times is very effective, but to which it is exceedingly dangerous for a cross-eyed man to have recourse.

A suppressed but quite audible titter came up from various parts of the hall. Tom, however, did not regard this as in any way personal, but supposed it to have been drawn out by his novel proposition.

"Mebbe that does sound funny," he said; "but 'tain't no funnier 'an 'tis truer.

"Fur," he continued, tipping his head slightly to one side and assuming an argumentative attitude, "don't Philip Middleton only take John Waters's place in the mill? Ain't his time Waters's time? Then ain't he John Waters while he's in the mill? An' ain't John Waters a member of the union in good standin'? Now, if Philip Middleton is John Waters in the mill, then Waters is him in the union, and virsy visy as you might say. Well then, why should we call on Philip Middleton to join the union when

legally, lawfully and rightly, an' to all intents and purposes—he bein' Waters in the mill and Waters him in the union—he is already, has been for a long time, and will continue to be a member of the union—eh?"

With this interrogation uttered in crescendo and with an explosive and piercing climax, Tom carefully gathered in his coat-tails and sat down.

Tom, however, had the misfortune never to be taken seriously in the union meetings; and it is feared that whatever force there was in his argument on this occasion was more than neutralized by the general merriment he had aroused in his listeners.

Certainly the speaker who followed Tom did not appear to have been very much influenced by his speech. This man, Aaron Gilks by name, was a large, powerfully built man, towering head and shoulders above his fellows, a veritable Titan in appearance as he was in many of his characteristics. His big head sat firmly upon massive shoulders and was fittingly capped by a mass of bushy, iron-gray hair that showed little of the hairdresser's art. The great square jaws were the most noticeable features of his face, although all the features were large and in

their rugged contour showed not unlike the first rough chiseling of the sculptor before he has reduced and polished the face of his statue to lines of artistic finish.

Gilks was one of the puddlers in the mill. He was not only a good workman, but, what was more rare, a workman who had taken to himself the injunction of the Apostle Paul to Timothy—he had given attendance to reading. Unfortunately, his reading had been pretty much along one line—the socialistic—and this is always dangerous. It had made him remarkably well-informed upon sociological questions, but rather narrow, intolerant and uncharitable. He had imbibed the ideas with little of the spirit of leading socialist writers. He saw society divided into two hostile camps, the oppressed and the oppressors, the exploited and the exploiters, those who sow where they do not reap, and those who reap where they have not sown. Convinced of the inequity and iniquity of the existing social order he looked for no escape or relief for the oppressed classes in any gradual process of reform. Not by a slow social evolution, but by revolution were they to come into their own. To this end federation among the laboring classes was the duty

of the hour, that they might oppose a formidable solidarity against their oppressors in the day of the inevitable and irrepressible conflict. He could see no identity of interest between labor and capital, and therefore in his scheme conciliation and forbearance had no place. Rather, the spirit militant was to be aroused and encouraged, for it was a life-and-death struggle, in which quarter should neither be asked nor given.

Bold and fearless in the expression of his views, and dogged and stubborn in his adherence to them, Gilks presented that compound of devotion and fanaticism which is the seed of martyrs.

Naturally, he wielded a great influence in the union, and any position that he might take upon a question before it, was sure to have the support of a large following. When, therefore, he now rose to speak, the general levity which Tenwick had excited gave way to an attitude of serious attention.

"One would think," he said, "that our friend Tenwick was a lawyer arguing a case in court. He's been splitting some very fine hairs—trying to make us believe that black's white; that two and two make five. But I hope that the other members of the union

won't take leave of their common sense as Tenwick has. I hope the rest of us still believe that two and two make four in spite of what Mr. Tenwick has said, or what anybody may say, to dispute that mathematical proposition.

"Now, Mr. President," continued Gilks, gathering himself together for his argument, "we know that Philip Middleton is working in the mills, don't we? And don't we know, too, that he is not a member of the union? Isn't this enough for us to know to make clear the course we ought to take in this matter? You know, Mr. President—and all the members of the union know—what trouble we've had in making the mill a union mill; in keeping men out of it who were not willing to join the union. Now, let's keep it a union mill. We can't do this if we allow any exceptions to our rule; if we waive it in favor of any person working in the mills, no matter who he is or what the circumstances may be under which he is working."

Philip Middleton's working in the mills in the way he did—Gilks went on to say—might seem to be a matter of little consequence, and one about which the union should not concern itself. But it was not a small

matter if they looked below the surface of it. As the chair had said, it *was* a matter that was fraught with grave consequences to the union. It was of much greater consequence than if Philip Middleton had been an ordinary non-union workman. For who was this young man? He was the son of the president of the company. Was the president friendly to the union? Must he not see in the growth and strength of the union a menace to the selfish and oppressive policy which was taxing the workmen to swell the company's dividends? Would his son, whose interests were those of his father, be any the more friendly to them? Would he not be a spy in their camp, acquainting himself with their plans and purposes that he might frustrate them, and using his influence to spread sedition and discontent among the members of the union, and thus to undermine and weaken, and perhaps eventually destroy, the union? He might, perhaps, be making it easier for one of their men, and in this way appear to be benefiting them. But he (Gilks) feared these Greeks bearing gifts. The gift might be in the outstretched hand but a dagger was in the hand they did not see. This young man's interests were not their

interests. His friends were not their friends. There was a great gulf stretching between them, and it could not be spanned by any protestations of friendship or by any such play-work as young Middleton was now engaged in.

And he wished to say to John Waters, too, that this thing would do him no good in the end. This was only a whim of Middleton's, and, even if let alone, he would keep it up only so long as it suited his humor, and no longer. Then he would quit, and Waters would have to go back to the old grind, and would find it harder than before because he had felt what it was to be released from it. Waters was one of themselves. He belonged to the great army of labor, and no permanent good could come to him that did not come to the mass of which he was a part. They must rise or sink together. There was nothing in this affair but what was temporary, sporadic and passing. It had come and it would go like a bubble on the water, leaving no effect or trace behind it. The whole present industrial system was rotten to the core, and it could not be cured by any mere local application. A specific was needed. The history of the world showed that political serfdom

had never been cured except by political revolution, and the industrial serfdom of to-day would not be cured except by an industrial revolution. He saw no other way, and he looked for no other way. Laboring men throughout the country must stand together and work together in order that they might finally fight together to free themselves from the industrial slavery in which they were now held.

And they must not only know their friends, but they must recognize their enemies. They who were not for them were against them. A workman who was not in the union was an enemy to the union, aye, an enemy to labor; for labor must be united in order to accomplish anything. They wanted no camp-followers or hangers-on or dead-weights in their campaign. Certainly they wanted no interlopers or spies. He had no idea that young Middleton would care to join the union, and therefore they should lose no time in giving him to understand that he was not wanted in the mills. Eternal vigilance was the price of liberty; and in no way could they better exercise vigilance than in keeping inviolate the rule which they had made the very corner-stone of their organization and which was

essential to its safety and its growth. Let their watchword ever be, a union mill for union men.

Gilks's speech had evidently made a decided impression, for it was greeted with general applause, and several other speakers followed in the same vein. Many of the men, however, were not inclined to take such extreme views. During the time Philip had been working in the mill he had made the personal acquaintance of quite a number of the workmen, and had won their friendship and confidence. While all of these workmen were in sympathy with the general purposes of the union, they did not regard Philip's presence in the mills as at all likely to defeat these purposes, and so were not disposed to have the union interfere with him. This feeling found expression finally in repeated calls for John Waters to take the floor.

"Waters!" "John Waters!" "Let's hear Waters!" came up from various parts of the hall.

Waters had sat listening to the speeches with mixed emotions. Anger and resentment at the disposition to interfere with Philip which was manifested struggled with another feeling more personal to himself.

Who has not had his Mount Pisgahs of exaltation, when, forgetting the things which are behind and below, he has gazed over into a Promised Land of plenty and feasted his eyes upon its rich and fruitful fields; when for a time he has been lifted above the ordinary experiences of life into a rarer atmosphere of hope and of joy and of aspiration?

Many such moments had Waters experienced since Philip came to relieve him in the mill. But now, as he listened to Gilks's speech, it seemed as if he were being brought down from the heights and once more meeting face to face the hard realities of his previous life; and it came as a disagreeable and benumbing shock proportioned in its severity to the ecstasy to which he had been transported by his beatific visions. Was, then, this new life which he had been living only a dream that must pass, a mere episode with no vital relation to the course of his destiny? Held down by the gravity of the mass of his fellows, was it futile for him to try to raise himself above the general level?

Well, it might be so; and yet Waters knew that he would never be quite the same man that he was before, even if he should be compelled to return to the former conditions

of labor. He had had his mount of transfiguration, and its irradiating and uplifting influence was not to leave him amid the storm and stress of coming days.

It was seldom that Waters spoke in the meetings of the union. He had not the gift of public speech. Words that fell so glibly from the lips of many of the members of the union came haltingly and uncertainly to his own. So that as he now reluctantly rose to speak in response to the urgent calls, it was with fear and trembling and with little expectation of stemming the tide that seemed setting to the overwhelming of his hopes and prospects. Falteringly, hesitatingly he began, making a painful effort to express himself in broken, disjointed and incoherent sentences which betokened all too plainly that mental paralysis which seizes upon one not accustomed to think upon his feet. A collapse seemed imminent.

But now a strange thing happened.

Who has not, either in his own experience or in observation of others, become conscious of such a thing as inspirational speaking, when words, thoughts, fine phrasings, apt illustration come we know not how or whence; when the speaker seems but the instrument,

the medium, through which a power external to himself finds expression?

But not a lawless intervention is this. The instrument must be attuned for the rendering of this rare music. The divine afflatus comes only to him who has allied himself to the higher powers by his earnest longings and high aspirations. The pentecostal tongues of fire touch not the tongue of hate, of envy, of malice and uncharitableness, but come to the help of struggling love and good-will.

As John Waters groped along blindly, helplessly, with heart full, but with leaden tongue to give forth its surcharge; when he would have sunk into his seat in utter confusion, he suddenly felt an infusion of calm and impelling strength. The burden of it all seemed to be lifted from him. His tongue was loosed, and he now spoke easily. Words came unbidden to his lips and arranged themselves into sentences of logical sequence and compelling cogency. With ease of speech came ease of manner, and with confidence came courage. Abandoning himself completely to the impulse which was upon him he was carried along by a resistless current of thought and speech which seemed not to have

origin in himself, but of which he was only the mouthpiece.

The members of the union listened in surprise, which was not unmixed with a kind of awe, as Waters, with flashing eye, animated face and forceful gesture now raised his voice in passionate invective against the proposed interference with Philip, and, indeed, against the whole policy of coercion by which the union sought to augment its power. No real and lasting good could come to the union through compulsory membership. If spies and secret enemies were to be feared, should they not rather be looked for among those who were compelled to join the union against their free consent than among those outside the union with no part in its councils? Would they rear an edifice of industrial freedom upon a foundation of denial of liberty to the individual? Should not membership in the union be held out as a privilege to be sought rather than as a duty to be enforced? If a duty did rest upon all workmen regularly employed in the mills to join the union in order that the general good of the workers might be advanced by co-operative action, should such a duty be deemed to rest upon Philip Middleton under the circumstances

of his employment? And could any good come to the union by attempting coercion in his case? Would they not be wounding themselves with their own weapons? Connected as Philip was with the company, would not such a course simply result in widening the breach between the workmen and the company when the real good of both workers and the company depended upon its being lessened? When, now, such an important step had been taken by the president's son, which made for a closer relation, a better understanding between the company and its workmen, would they turn their faces against the light? Would they fire upon this flag of truce? Would they stir up antagonism and war in face of these overtures of peace? Would they make an enemy of a man who was disposed to be a friend? Would they stop his working with them in the mill to have him work against them in the office? They might, indeed, drive him from the mill, but could they force him to join the union? He wondered if there was any member of the union so foolish as to think that Philip Middleton would join the union under compulsion? If any one did entertain such a notion he certainly did not know the man.

But who, he asked, had once thought to invite Philip to join the union; to ask instead of demanding? What he would most certainly resent and refuse which came in the guise of force he might meet favorably if presented to him in a spirit of courtesy and good-will; if he were asked to join the union not simply in compliance with a hard-and-fast rule of the union, but that the union might have the benefit of his fellowship and of his counsels. Membership offered and accepted on such a basis as this would mean much to the union, for not only would they have the benefit of Philip's counsels but he would stand as an intermediary between the company and the union, to effect through conciliation what had not always been attained by costly strife.

In such a strain as this did Waters speak. Never before had such a speech been made at any meeting of the union, and, it may be said in passing, Waters never made another like it. He sat down exhausted, hardly knowing what he had said, nor knowing at all how he had managed to say it.

The speech brought about a complete revulsion of feeling in the union. One of the members who, following Mr. Gilks, had

spoken in support of the position taken by that bellicose individual, now arose and said:

"Mr. President, I guess we are getting the cart before the horse in this matter, and I therefore move that a committee be appointed by the chair to wait upon Philip Middleton and on behalf of the union extend to him a cordial invitation to join the union and to express the pleasure it would give us to have him do so. I also suggest that the committee so appointed be instructed to act, and report to us to-night, if possible, before we adjourn."

Tom Tenwick jumped up and hastily seconded the motion, and in his excitement sat down on his coat-tails. He quickly raised himself, however, and rescued them from their perilous predicament.

The motion was enthusiastically adopted without debate. John Waters, the mover of the motion, and one other member of the union were appointed as the committee, and they at once left the hall to execute their commission.

Waters had previously arranged with Philip to report to him after the meeting, and at a certain place, the action that the union should take touching himself.

The committee were not absent, therefore,

more than twenty minutes. But they returned not alone. Philip came with them. Waters's face was radiant, and told as plainly as the formal report of the committee that Philip had accepted the invitation extended by the committee on behalf of the union, and was prepared to join the union.

Cheer after cheer greeted this announcement. Tom Tenwick led the cheering, jumping up and sitting down in quick succession, now utterly forgetful of his coat-tails, sitting down on them with the most reckless abandon.

On motion the rules were suspended and Philip was elected to membership in the union by acclamation, not even Gilks voting in the negative.

In response to the general demand, Philip addressed the union briefly, thanking the members for the courtesy they had shown him in the invitation which had been extended, and in the unanimous vote by which he had been elected to membership in their body. He trusted that he should find nothing inconsistent in his membership in the union and his relation to the company; that the relations between the company and the workmen as represented in the union might ever be

cordial and friendly, and characterized by that candor, fairness and forbearance which were so necessary to a mutual understanding and an advantageous co-operation. Certainly he should do all in his power to promote and cement such relations. Entering the mill as an experiment quite personal to himself, he was not blind to the opportunity which seemed to grow out naturally from the relationship which he had assumed—an opportunity for service both to the men in the mill and to the company. Indeed, that opportunity now afforded him a greater incentive and a more plausible motive for continuing his work in the mill than did the original reason for entering upon it. It would hardly be fitting at this time to outline any policy, if, indeed, he had any, or to make any promises for the future, as he did not want his performance to lag behind his promise; but he sincerely hoped to justify the vote of confidence which they had given him, and that he himself should never have occasion to regret the step that he had taken.

Philip's remarks were warmly received, and at their close the union adjourned with three cheers for Philip Middleton and John Waters.

Aaron Gilks elbowed his way through the

crowd that surrounded Philip after the adjournment, and extending his hand to him said:

"I give you the right hand of fellowship, young man, but mark my word, sir, the time will come when you will either have to quit the union or the company."

"Thank you for your greeting," said Philip, smiling, "and for the rest, I hope you will prove a false prophet."

But one needed to be neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet to make a plausible forecast of trouble to Philip from the step he had just taken.

CHAPTER XIII

Philip Hears from a Fair Disciple

Less than a month had elapsed since the visit of Mr. Elridge and his daughter to Ellerton, when Philip made a short visit to St. Louis. A personal conference with Mr. Elridge relative to the steel-rail contract that had been closed with his company seemed desirable, and Philip persuaded his father that he could attend to the matter.

It is hardly likely that Philip would have cared particularly about transacting this business on behalf of the Ellerton company had he not had some business in St. Louis to attend to on his own account. What this personal business was might have been suspected from the alacrity with which he accepted Mr. Elridge's invitation to dinner at his house, and from his subsequent sedulous attentions to his daughter.

On his return to Ellerton it was, of course, incumbent upon him to write to Miss Elridge to advise her of his safe arrival home and to acknowledge his indebtedness for her con-

tribution to the pleasure of his visit. He endeavored to make not too pointed his request for an answer to his letter, but sufficiently explicit to have warranted a charge of ungraciousness on the part of Miss Elridge had she neglected to comply with it.

And so the epistolary ball was started rolling, gathering volume and momentum with its every revolution.

It would be rude to pry into the delightful privacies of this correspondence. Most of it was of a character to be interesting only to the parties immediately concerned, and well illustrated Victor Hugo's aphorism that love is an opera, in which the libretto is nothing.

One of Miss Elridge's letters, however, struck a serious note, and in its contents was of a character sufficiently unusual to warrant publication. This letter ran as follows:

Dear Mr. Middleton:—

I seem to have piqued your curiosity by saying in my last letter that I might have something of interest to tell you the next time I wrote. The matter to which I had reference seems now to be ripe for telling, and I am going to satisfy your curiosity.

Do you recall my last words to you when we parted on the train at Ellerton? Of

course, you did not take them seriously or expect to hear of their realization in fact. And yet, in sober fact they have been realized.

Yes—I, Miss Katherine Elridge, may now frequently be found, from two or three until five o'clock in the afternoon, at the offices of the Iron Mountain Railway Company, busy as a bee, sorting and filing papers, checking and tabulating figures, working at the typewriter—in the use of which instrument I am becoming quite expert—and doing various other things pertaining to the office business; while the girl who ordinarily does this work has the opportunity to take my rôle—that of lady of leisure.

Are you surprised? You should not be unpleasantly so; for I am but putting your own theory to a practical test.

In doing what I have done I have not acted upon sudden impulse, but only after mature consideration and reflection. The genesis of my purpose dates from my visit to Ellerton. As the train whirled us on our way to Chicago, after leaving you, I naturally fell to thinking about the somewhat unusual incident which marked our visit to Ellerton, and about your very interesting dissertation on the obligations of young men and women

of leisure. I am not sure that you did not put a little too much color into your picture of the life of the average society woman; but the picture was, perhaps, fairly representative. I myself might well have sat for it. My life did seem to lack a serious purpose. Had it, indeed, any purpose at all, I asked myself, beyond the continuing one of devising ways and means for pleasure and diversion? How fearfully unsatisfying I had often felt it to be! Surely I ought to have something more to exercise my faculties upon than the trivialities which mostly engaged them. The more I thought about your suggestion the more seriously I thought of it. I saw an opportunity to put your theory into practice right in my father's offices, where a number of girls were employed, any one of whom would, without doubt, be glad to have a portion of the time I was so prodigal of.

I was confirmed in my purpose after your visit here, and I had learned that you were still enthusiastic over your experiment and more than satisfied with its results.

So I finally broached the subject to father. Of course he laughed at me. When he found me serious about it, he demurred, opposing many objections based upon business reasons

and reasons personal. I finally overcame them, however, and he let me have my own way, as he usually does.

You may imagine I had little difficulty in making an arrangement with one of the girls in the office whereby I was to run in any afternoon and take her work and she was to run away and play, but without any diminution of her monthly stipend.

Well, for the past six weeks I have been a quite regular attendant at the office in the afternoon, and, so far as I am personally concerned, I am ready to say, without reservation, that the experiment has fully justified itself. I cannot tell you what happiness has come to me from the feeling that I am doing something useful; that all my time is not given over to the frivolous and ephemeral nothings of society life.

Another source of happiness, and not the least, either, is the fact that I now see more of the very best man in all the world—my father. Before I began coming to the office I saw so little of him. He was engrossed with his business during the day, and I with my social engagements in the evening. We are now together most of the time that I am at the office, and usually go home together

at night. Really, we have become quite chummy. He now seems as pleased to have me come to the office as does the girl whom I relieve. I have become familiar with the work, also, and sufficiently proficient in the performance of it (if I may credit the assurances of my business superiors) so that the efficiency of the company's office service does not suffer by my connection with it.

I need not tell you that this thing has created somewhat of a sensation in society circles here, and has been made the subject of varied comment. When I made up my mind to do what I have done I certainly was not blind to the probability of unfavorable criticism. Nor has that been spared me. This, however, has not disturbed me so much as I have been gratified to learn that two or three other young women of leisure have made tentative efforts in the same direction. Who knows? perhaps I have started the fad that you suggested. I hope not a fad, however, for fads are short-lived. But in the interest of my many weary sisters who so often yawn through the day over things that profit little, I should like to see my course meet with general approval and adoption. A little serious work would give a zest to pleasures

that otherwise pall through superabundance. If our society women would but take an occasional matinée at some place of business, they would better enjoy those at the theatre.

Besides, should not every woman have some acquaintance with practical, everyday affairs? Should she not know something about the great business and industrial movements of the day—yes, and exercise an intelligent influence in shaping them?

Oh, I know this is decidedly heterodox from the viewpoint of lordly man—the average man at least—who will never dissociate woman from the distaff, and limits her sphere of activity within the four walls of the home. Of course, no right-thinking woman will minimize the importance of home duties. But if you confine a woman to these commonplace duties, take care that you do not make her commonplace also. Is not woman a soul, as man is, with like capacity for growth and development? Then should she be shut in—deprived of the experiences that minister to growth? Surely not. Her horizon should be as wide as the world. She should have her hand on the pulse of the times, feeling its pulsations and vibrating in sympathy with them.

I sometimes look back enviously to the days of the society woman's supremacy in France; when her salons were frequented by statesmen, writers, scholars, artists—the intellectual society of the time; when she was not only in touch with the great movements of the day, but when they felt her guiding and directing hand. This must have been to live and to be alive! What dignity, poise and purpose in such a life! To feel oneself moving with the current of things, not idly looking on, an uninformed spectator.

It is a far cry, in character as well as in time, from these Paris salons to the fashionable drawing-rooms of to-day. All the men of serious purpose seem to have left them, and their most persistent frequenters are the tiresome chatterboxes whose heads are as light as their purses are heavy. Few, indeed, are the inducements that society life has to offer to men of wit, of learning and of affairs. What inspiration can there be for them in the frivolous hurly-burly of most of its functions? Its exactions, indeed, are wholly incompatible with all purposeful living. Moreover, the expense entailed in keeping abreast with its demands effectually closes the door to those who are unfurnished with the Open

Sesame of the dollar.

But pardon me, Mr. Middleton, for wearying you with this jeremiad. It was quite beside my purpose in writing this letter. One who starts to tear down should be prepared to build up; and I am sure I have no desire to pose as a social reformer. It would be a thankless and perhaps gratuitous task to try to reform fashionable society. It may not need reforming. It may represent, in its extravagances and objectionable features, a phase of life which if driven from one stage would appear upon another. Certainly, many, if not the majority, of the devotees at fashion's shrine are so wholly joined to their idols that they must be let alone. But there are, I am sure, many earnest and sincere women in society who, while they join in its frivolities, are not apologists for them, but are rather constrained by use and custom to live a sort of butterfly life which their judgment disapproves. To such women I would not be averse to going as a missionary to preach the saving grace of a little serious work with their play; an occasional joining of hands with their humbler sisters in the common avocations of life; a little first-hand knowledge of social, industrial and business conditions,

so that they may effectively work and co-operate for their amelioration. A new departure of that kind taken by these women would prove an excellent antidote for the tedium and ennui that so frequently depress them. They would not only find themselves eased of most of their own life-weariness but would radiate a wholesome influence in the circles in which they move. It would make for the establishment of a new fashionable society, a society which should recognize higher standards than mere purse and pedigree, and which would draw people of serious purpose into it by reason of its own lofty ideals and worthy interests.

Utopian, this? Many would think so, and see in it only the ardor and enthusiasm of a new convert. I believe that you, however, will give me a more serious and appreciative ear, for it is from your precept and example that I have taken my inspiration.

Now write to me and tell me that you were not displeased to hear what you have heard from a humble disciple who has greatly profited by your teaching, and who therefore subscribes herself as

Your obliged friend,
Katherine Otis Elridge.

If Philip was displeased with Miss Elridge's letter, his actions strangely belied it; for he read the letter a half-dozen times, and sat up until the small hours of the night writing an answer to it.

CHAPTER XIV

After Two Years

This history now moves forward two years. In thus leaving a hiatus in its records it departs from the true historic method. Your orthodox historian is nothing if not a chronologer, and a lapse in time is as abhorrent to him as a dateless event. Following the traditions of his craft he throws a drag-net over the period of which he writes and brings everything to the surface—some things that would better remain in their congenial mud at the bottom. Nor is he disturbed by the fact that he must thus at times make of himself a sort of literary scavenger, for he thinks he can always justify himself by the plea, "These things actually happened."

The aforesaid orthodox historian has some imitators among the novelists, particularly in the matter of scavengering. Generally speaking, however, novelists are more obedient to the law of perspective. Not always willingly, perhaps, but of necessity compelled to be. They have not the historian's privilege

of spreading their lucubrations over a dozen volumes, but, if they are solicitous of an audience, must contract them into one of a comfortable size. Some there are, however, who must be rather impatient under such a limitation, for they will often spread a duodecimo of matter over a folio of space.

But lest this last be said of the present narrative, let us hurry on with it, nor stop longer to forge missiles that may be hurled at our own vulnerable person.

To proceed, then. The mills had prospered. That is to say, the stockholders had. Even Mr. Munson with his lonely two shares of stock felt the swell of this wave of prosperity, and as he pocketed an unusually generous dividend, was more than ever disposed to assert a proprietary interest in the mills.

"Yes, we've made a lot o' money in the last two years," he said in response to an inquiry about the mills. "Those big railroad contracts helped us immensely. We're figuring on some others now, and if we land them we'll have to put on an extra force of men and increase our mill space."

And the workmen in the mills? Oh, yes—true, they should, perhaps, be taken into

account. Well, they had prospered, too. Their prosperity, however, was of a negative sort. Their wages had not been reduced!

"No," Mr. Middleton had several times occasion to say, "for two years, now, we've not once been compelled to reduce the wages of our men." This, with the complacency of a man who feels that he has done his full duty, and as if he thought that the management of the mills and the workmen as well were proper subjects for congratulation.

Had he been asked the quite natural question why the company had not raised the wages of the workmen in keeping with its increased returns, Mr. Middleton might have answered the question variously. Upon first promptings—regarding the question as an impertinence—he would most likely have made use of that fine and conclusive phrase, "We didn't have to." Or, if he felt the pressing of any moral obligation in the matter, he might have followed the example set by the senior member of the famous firm of Spenlow & Jorkins, and said that while he himself had been disposed to increase the wages of the men, and would have done so had the matter been entirely in his own hands, Mr. Hartland, who owned such a large block of

the stock of the company, would, he knew, have been unalterably opposed to any such thing. Which statement, so far as it concerned Mr. Hartland, was undoubtedly true.

But there would have been no need for Mr. Middleton to have recourse to evasion or subterfuge. He could have given an eminently plausible and convincing reason. He could have brought to his support the unimpeachable postulates of any standard work on Political Economy—that devil's own science, which builds upon the foundation of a glaring paradox—an enlightened selfishness! Is it not written in such works that labor (the laborer?) is a commodity the price of which is regulated by the law of supply and demand? Do you not go into the open market and buy it just as you buy cattle, paying more for it when it is scarce and less when it is plentiful?

A natural sense of justice would suggest that if a particular enterprise be successful the laborer who produces its product should share in any increased income therefrom. "Not so," says the political economist. "His wages have no necessary connection with the particular enterprise in which he may be engaged, but are regulated by the proportion which the laboring population, generally,

bears to the general wages-fund, which fund is determined by the amount of the general wealth which is applied to the direct purchase of labor." True, it will not be gainsaid that when there is a depression in any business the laborer on its payrolls is the first to feel the depression in the shape of a reduction of wages or loss of employment. But he has his remedy, the political economist would tell him. The entire labor market is open to him; and the depression in one business or locality may be offset by a buoyancy in others. That is to say, if he finds the conditions of labor irksome or the wages low in the factories of Massachusetts, conditions may be more favorable and wages higher in the mines of California, and he should hie himself thither. And this to a man who may be wondering how he is going to pay his next month's house rent, or where he is going to get the money to pay the doctor's bill in an approaching emergency!

Philip Middleton was not ignorant of the economic relation of capital and labor as set forth in the books, but he had found it difficult to square economic theory with the practical condition that confronted him; and as he saw the coffers of the company filling up from

the increase of profitable business he could not help feeling that there should be a corresponding increase in wages and salaries, at least so far as concerned the employees who had been for a considerable time on the payrolls of the company. But when he broached this proposition to his father he quickly found himself in the position of the well-meaning but injudicious Josiah Allen who soon after his second marriage began to extol to his better half the culinary accomplishments of his first wife—"he wasn't encouraged in it."

Nevertheless, Philip had been instrumental in bringing about a number of improvements in the mills. Two things should be particularly mentioned. Wash-rooms had been put up in the various sections of the mill, and the workmen instead of elbowing themselves over long troughs outside the mills, as formerly, now repaired after their work to well appointed lavatories where each workman had a numbered locker in which to keep his belongings. The other noteworthy improvement was a large lunch hall which was erected adjacent to the mills, and provided with counters, tables and chairs, where at a moderate cost sufficient to make the hall self-

supporting, the workmen who so wished could get a lunch of well-cooked and wholesome food, or where they could take the lunches they had brought with them and wash them down with a cup of hot coffee or tea.

These, and a few other minor betterments, coupled with Philip's personal influence upon the men, both in the mill and in the union, the meetings of which he frequently attended, served to bring about a general good feeling among the workmen, and may have had the indirect effect of making them somewhat oblivious of the growing disparity between the wage scale and the profits of the company. For the most part, however, they were doubtless unconscious of any such increasing disparity. The secrets of the counting-room seldom leak out into the workshops. Workmen are rarely so clamorous because their wages are not increased as they are when they are lowered. There never can, however, be an equitable adjustment of relations between employers and employed until conscience and not greed sits between them as time-keeper.

Philip had been faithful to his work in the mill. Indeed, he was wont to say that he

enjoyed the three hours' work in the mill more than the five in the office. Of course, he had taken a day off occasionally, and three or four short vacations. These vacations had, strange to say, been spent in St. Louis. Strange, because that city is seldom the objective point with people going on vacations. Nevertheless, Philip always came home looking as if he had enjoyed himself. And no doubt he had.

John Waters had justified Philip's confidence. He had not wasted the time that Philip had placed at his disposal. Inspired by the laudable purpose which has been mentioned, namely, to invent something that could be utilized in the mills, he cast about for an idea. An idea came to him, naturally enough, as he was at work one day at the rolls. The haulers were pulling a buggy loaded with a heated pile down to the rollers. When they came near the rolls they gave the buggy the usual swing forward. One of the haulers was a little slow, however, in disengaging his hook from the buggy, and the jerk of the buggy caused him to slip and fall. In his fall he struck the heated bar and was severely burned. Similar accidents had been narrowly averted before. It occurred to Waters

that the buggy method was a cumbersome as well as a dangerous method of transferring the bars from the furnaces to the rolls. Surely a better and safer way could be devised. Here was something for him to work on; and he straightway put his mind upon it. Day after day, week after week, and month after month he applied himself faithfully and patiently to the problem, following out tentatively one idea after another. Finally he hit upon a device which seemed to promise well. After working out the details of the proposed contrivance, he carefully drew the plans, and was now about ready to submit them to Philip, and, if they met with his approval, get his assistance in having the device patented and put into use.

The device was not a very intricate one. Many very useful inventions have been exceedingly simple; and when the inventors (or, as usually, their assignees) have reaped fortunes from them, the envious many, who are proverbially wise after the fact, wonder why these ideas never occurred to them. They could be easily answered. An invention, or, indeed, an artistic piece of work in any field of human endeavor, which seems so simple in itself, comes usually, if not invariably, as

the result of some hard previous thinking and doing. When one, by patient and persistent thought, has wooed the higher powers, great and precious secrets which are imminent and encompass him about on every side will be revealed to him—secrets to which the casual mind will always be oblivious.

Waters's device dispensed with buggies and haulers. It consisted of grooved, roller-bottomed and roller-sided runways which should stretch from the furnaces flanking the several sections of the mill, and curve and feed into a similar central runway which gave upon the rolls. The runways were to be at an angle of slope so that the bars with an initial momentum would run easily through them down to the rolls. At the furnaces the runways elbowed down upon blank hinges. Attached to the ends of the elbows were chains running upon overhead pulleys. The bars from the furnaces were to be placed upon these elbows, drawn up by the heaters by means of the chains and pulleys and shot into the runways.

Waters had no difficulty in impressing Philip with the feasibility of his invention, nor in getting his promise of assistance in bringing it out. True, Philip had no very marked mechanical turn of mind, and so

was hardly competent to pass upon the merits of a mechanical invention. But Waters's contrivance was not so intricate as to pass beyond his limited comprehension in such matters; and apart from any material considerations he was glad to co-operate with Waters in the matter because of the gratification he felt at this evidence of ambitious endeavor on his part, and over the realization that the lifting of the physical burden from Waters was not only to make the conditions of his life easier, but seemed likely also to result in his increased usefulness.

With the assistance of a local attorney the necessary papers for the procuring of a patent were drawn up and forwarded to the Patent Office at Washington. In due time letters patent were issued to John Waters for new and improved steel-mill runways, and granting to him, his heirs and assigns, for the term of seventeen years, the exclusive right "to make, use, and vend the same throughout the United States and the Territories thereof."

The invention was now brought to the attention of Superintendent Mitchell, and having obtained the tentative approval from him of "That looks good, an' it might be worth tryin'," Philip laid the matter before

his father, soliciting his consent to have the runways made by the company and installed in the mills.

It was while Mr. Middleton was giving this project a favorable consideration that certain events, momentous in the history of the company, began their course; events that were big with consequences, and which not only seemed likely to make Waters's patent a barren right so far as the Ellerton steel company was concerned, but which even threatened the very life of that prosperous institution.

CHAPTER XV

Clouds on the Horizon

Every business is subject to fluctuations; none more so, perhaps, than the iron and steel trade. The ebb tides in the history of the Ellerton Iron & Steel Works, however, had not thus far been of a character to seriously interfere with the general tenor of its business. The company had never been compelled to pass a dividend since it first began to pay dividends; a fact which was a matter of great pride with Mr. Middleton.

But it is easy to sail a boat in good weather. The skill of the sea-captain is shown when he keeps the nose of his vessel pointed to her course amid the storm that threatens to engulf her. So it is not difficult to make a business pay dividends when generally prosperous conditions prevail and there is a uniformly steady market for the output of that business. The real test of the true captain of industry comes when business conditions become adverse. He then shows himself when by wise economies, tact in the handling of employees,

judicious curtailment of product to correspond with the lessening demand, alertness in seizing upon new markets or wise initiative in creating them, he tides over those periods of industrial depression which periodically litter the business arena with the wrecks of enterprises less ably and resourcefully managed.

One of these industrial and business depressions was now stealing over the country. Insidious in its approach, as such depressions usually are, its presence was finally made manifest in the general paralysis which seemed to have fallen upon the business world. Bank clearances fell off; loans were called in; customary credits were withheld; jobbing-houses were calling in their salesmen in face of decreasing sales and cancelled orders; building operations were checked; mills and factories were being shut down, and failures were frequent.

Staple as was the output of the Ellerton steel company, it was, nevertheless, beginning to feel the effect of the depression; and more and more did it feel it as time went on. As the time approached for the payment of one of the regular semi-annual dividends it became apparent to Mr. Middleton and to the other officers of the company that some

radical measures would have to be taken besides trenching upon the company's cash surplus or that dividend would have to be passed.

In view of the existing business conditions it might seem as if the passing of this dividend would have been the most natural and a not at all serious thing to do. Not so did it seem to Mr. Middleton, however. As has been stated, it was a matter of pride as well as of considerable profit to him that dividends had been regularly paid by the company.

To another officer and heavy stockholder in the company, also, the prospect of the company's passing a dividend was not a pleasant one, to say the least. Mr. Hartland would have had little difficulty in pocketing any pride he may have had in the matter; but not to pocket his regular dividends—that was a different thing altogether, and one that he could not contemplate with any semblance of equanimity. The very thought of it was enough to set his wolfish nature bristling with preventive expedients.

First, of course, there would have to be a general and considerable reduction in wages and salaries; and Mr. Hartland lost no time in urging the necessity of this upon Mr.

Middleton. Loath as Mr. Middleton was to take this step, he was not so fertile in expedients as to find a substitute for it that would meet the present emergency. The dividend payment must be made at all hazards. The credit and standing of the company could not be imperiled by having it passed. Strange, that Mr. Middleton should see no impairment of that credit in a cut of wages. But he did not; nor would the business world generally. There is something sacred, seemingly, in stock certificates that does not inhere in the wages-fund. The latter may be cut and slashed, may ebb and flow as unstable as a tidal river, and it will be of little significance to the business community. But stock quotations are eagerly and carefully scanned. It is of little or no importance what wages a concern may pay, but it is of the highest importance how its stock is rated. And this is so not alone with the investing public but with people generally. As they have deified the dollar so they have apotheosized its representative, the stock certificate; so that by a sort of divine right the holder looks for and exacts its breeding increase, though this may cost the more than pound of flesh and blood of his toiling brother.

Mr. Middleton did not regard the existing business depression as other than temporary, and so became disposed favorably to the wage-cutting course insisted upon by Mr. Hartland, for he reflected that this course would relieve the present tension and bridge the company's difficulties until the not distant time when restored prosperous business conditions would warrant a restoration of the present wage scale. And he allayed whatever scruples he had in the matter by promising himself that wages should be restored at that time.

Mr. Hartland also regarded the business depression as temporary, but also as opportune for a permanent reduction of wages. He knew that as a rule when wages are reduced they rarely, or very slowly, come back to the former level; and if he could but once get them reduced in the mills he would make it his care to see that their return to their former level should be slow indeed.

Of course, Mr. Middleton looked for considerable grumbling among the workmen, if not some active opposition, when the wage cut should be made. And here he counted upon Philip's assistance in allaying their discontent and reconciling them to the situation. He now congratulated himself that he had

such a good friend at the workmen's court; that Philip's association with the men in the mill and in the union, to which he had never become quite resigned, was now to redound to the benefit of the company. Philip had made himself extremely popular with the men, and they would, without doubt, be influenced and guided by his advice. Mr. Middleton did not for a moment doubt that this advice would be in the interest of the company; nor did he have a thought that Philip might have some very decided views of his own in the matter that would not dovetail very well with those held by himself. Why, indeed, should he have harbored such a thought? Philip was his own son, with the most flattering and assured expectations for the future. He was soon to hold a responsible position with the company; and he had, besides, in his own right, a quite respectable block of the company's stock. Assuredly, there could not be two opinions as to the position he would take in the matter.

So sure was Mr. Middleton of Philip's support that he did not think it necessary to take him into his confidence in regard to the proposed step. It might have been better had he done so. It might have been better still

if he had taken the workmen themselves into his confidence. This, of course, would have been against all precedent. Although wage-workers are the ones most seriously affected by a drop in the wage scale, they are not considered necessary or even proper parties to be consulted in any new adjustment of it. Yet, if they were so consulted, many of the labor troubles that disturb the business world might be averted. There are times when wages must be reduced. The wage-workers themselves might be led to see the necessity of this in a friendly conference in which the conditions and resources of the business were frankly disclosed to them. But when the wage cut comes upon the worker like a stab in the dark, and with the implied arrogant alternative, "take it or leave it," it is not surprising that he should suspect that the cut has little else behind it than the cupidity of his employer.

Thus suddenly and unexpectedly came the notice of the wage cut upon the Ellerton mill employees. Notices were posted in the mills on a Saturday announcing that beginning on the following Monday there would be a twenty per cent reduction in wages throughout the mills. The cut was necessary, so the notices stated, owing to the existing great business

depression throughout the country, and in order that the mills might be continued in operation.

From his connection with the company and remarks dropped by his father in conversation, Philip had become advised that the approaching dividend payment was a matter of some embarrassment to the company. How that payment was to be made, however, was not a question that had obtruded itself seriously upon his thought. If he had thought of it at all, he certainly had not contemplated a radical wage cut as a means to that end. No workman in the mills, therefore, could have been more surprised or dumfounded than was Philip when he read the posted notice.

A cut of twenty per cent! Such a reduction, Philip knew very well, meant to many of the workmen the wiping out of all margin above the actual necessaries of living. And the real if not the avowed purpose of this reduction of wages was to secure the payment of a regular dividend to the stockholders. And who were the stockholders? His father and Mr. Hartland, principally. He himself was a stockholder. Directly, then, and in expectancy, he was a beneficiary of the wage-cutting policy. With what face could he continue his work in the mills, meeting daily the reproachful

looks of the workmen who would have cause to suspect him of being a party to their oppression? How could he ever again raise his voice in a meeting of the union? Would not any future assurances of the good-will of the company toward its workmen sound hollow and hypocritical in the light of this concrete example of illiberality? And would the men listen with any patience to his disclaimers of responsibility for the company's action, knowing that it would inure to his financial gain?

Had he, then, come to the parting of the ways, where he could no longer maintain his dual position of the past? Well, and if he had, what of it? To many, certainly, it would not seem that he was confronted with any very serious or complicated problem. Could there be any doubt in which direction his interest—yes, and his very duty, lay? He held a position with and stock in the company. His father was at the head of it. The company had taken certain action to further the payment of its dividends. Surely every motive of self-interest and of filial duty should move him not only to acquiesce in but to support such action. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred would not have felt themselves confronted by any dilemma here.

The ninety-nine would have unhesitatingly yielded to the evident logic of the situation and at once severed relations with the mill workers when such relations were so apparently opposed to self-interest.

But Philip was the hundredth man—the man with a conscience!

Conscience! How many blunders, from a worldly point of view, are committed in its name! How often its leadings seem to be away from worldly honors, emoluments and preferments. And yet the noble soul must needs listen to the still small voice, and obey its inexorable mandates, cost what it may. Yea, in the very shadow of death itself, he must say, as said the great apostle of the Reformation: "There I take my stand. I can do naught else. So help me, God. Amen!"

But such obedience brings its reward; and that reward is genuine. As, in the end, the flagellations of conscience are merciless upon him who has disobeyed its behests for the sake of immediate gain, turning such gains to ashes in his hands, so from the crucible of persecution and of suffering and of loss for conscience' sake comes finally the resplendent jewel of character to give light and joy and beauty forever!

In the forum of conscience a law prevails that is different from the law of business. Business seems to be largely a matter of arithmetic. Can you, by a certain course of action, figure out a profit for yourself? Inquire no further. That course is the one for you to take, even though some one else may be badly pinched or squeezed by it. Let all your faculties be focused upon the main chance, and do not let your cold calculations suffer aberration by any moral considerations. Such is the law of business, and, implicitly obeyed, it eventually brings a certain kind of success: That success which is achieved by a man who has gathered together vastly more than he needs of this world's goods, but in whose heart the springs of love, of brotherly kindness and of generous impulse are dried up—sacrificed to that insatiate fetish—Gold, whose material rewards are, indeed, boundless, but whose talismanic key unlocks not the door of happiness and peace!

Philip Middleton's heart had not become hardened by long pupilage in the school of business. Hard-headed men of business (not hard-hearted, of course) would have called him unsophisticated, a term not infrequently used to characterize one who allows himself

to be swayed by the natural impulses of an ingenuous nature before it has become soured and perverted by familiarity with and adoption of worldly standards and worldly methods. And when such impulses express themselves in action, the same hard-headed men of business sneer at such actions as quixotic. "The purest impulses and the noblest purposes," says Ruskin, "have perhaps been oftener stayed by the devil under the name of quixotism than any other base name or false allegation."

The humorous creation of Cervantes, drawn for no other purpose than to pillory for public laughter the absurdities in the then current books on chivalry, has been made, the prototype of those who shape their conduct according to unmercenary and unselfish standards. A new commentary upon that great Spanish classic would seem to be needed to rescue its author from the false position in which the latter-day interpretation has placed him.

Yes, Philip Middleton, the money-grubbing, money-grabbing Philistine, with whom conscience has no coercive force and duty is a word of little meaning, would certainly have called you quixotic in the course you had now determined to take.

CHAPTER XVI

The Special Meeting

A special meeting of the mill workers' union had been called to discuss and to take action upon the wage cut.

Philip crossed his moral Rubicon by attending this meeting. In going to the meeting he had a double purpose in view. He not only wished to give the workmen assurances of his friendship and sympathy in the present crisis, but also to forestall, if possible, any hasty action on their part which might work irreparable injury both to themselves and to the company.

When he entered the assembly-hall on the night of the meeting a murmur of surprise went through the room. What had he come for?

"I wonder if he thinks he can scare us into keepin' our mouths shut," said one belligerent member.

"Well, if he does he's mightily mistaken," said the man who sat beside him.

"You bet he is."

"He can talk till he's blue in the face before he'll make us swallow that twenty-cent steal."

"That's what."

"But there's Waters smilin' an' talkin' friendly like to him."

"Waters ain't got no kick comin', anyway," said a little wizen-faced man who sat near. "He's only workin' short time; an' like as not, young Middleton's got him won over."

"Waters ain't no traitor," spoke up gruffly a big, burly man, looking down on the little man frowningly, "an' if he sides with Middleton to-night you can just bet Middleton's got somethin' up his sleeve we ain't lookin' fur."

"Well, we'll see," said the little man.

The meeting was opened, and the matter for the consideration of which the union had been convened was at once taken up.

The belligerent member who has been mentioned, lest Philip Middleton's presence should appear to have the effect of keeping mouths shut, was the first to open his. In a fierce harangue he railed against the injustice of the wage cut, denounced the company for having made it, and called upon the men to rebel against it.

His fiery speech seemed to set the pace for the other speakers. All condemned unsparingly the action of the company. Aaron Gilks, especially, now found a most favorable opportunity for airing and inculcating his radical ideas. He launched forth in an invective on the tyranny and soullessness of capital, the slavery of labor, and the mortal conflict between them. In submission the condition of the laborer was utterly hopeless; his only salvation was to rise in his might and strive with the malevolent power that was throttling him. The present wage cut was but the precursor of others if supinely submitted to; and he urged upon the union the duty and the necessity of opposing it by the most effective weapon they possessed—the strike.

Amid all the speaking, John Waters remained silent. There was much to prompt him to speak. If he had not so much occasion to feel aggrieved on his own account, his sympathy went out to his fellow workmen over what had happened, and he longed to express that sympathy publicly. But he had the greatest confidence in Philip, and felt sure that he had come to the meeting with a feeling of good-will toward the workmen, and

that he would before the meeting closed have something to offer that would both evidence such good-will and afford some sort of a solution of the present difficulty. He therefore waited for him to speak.

Tom Tenwick, too, repressed his usual disposition to seize the floor. True, he was somewhat handicapped on this night. He had come without his frock coat, and missed sadly the inspiration that came to him from that dignified garment. But, like Waters, he felt relieved of the duty and necessity of speaking through the expectation raised by Philip's presence. He had that kind of admiration for Philip which expects miracles, and he would not have been surprised if, when he rose to speak, he had at once dispelled the ugly nightmare of the wage cut. Tenwick, therefore, contented himself with darting angry glances at the speakers who made Philip the subject of any of their strictures. But it is feared that such glances had little deterrent effect upon the speakers even if they saw them; for Tom's cross-eyes, however fiercely they snapped, made very poor conductors of his displeasure.

Philip had certainly not been spared by many of the speakers. They naturally enough

imputed to him knowledge of an intended wage reduction and a supine acquiescence in, if not an actual abetting of it. Was this, said the irreconcilable Gilks, his promised friendship for the workmen and the measure of his good offices in their behalf with the company? If, since his entrance into the mill and the union, he had done some things to better the working conditions in the mills, were these but to lull them into a feeling of security in his friendship and make easier this final and flagrant act of injustice, as does the gambler who allows his unsuspecting victim to win a little at first in order that he may be lured into losing heavily at the last? And had he now come thinking to secure their acquiescence in the company's action? Let him not deceive himself. They were neither children nor fools to be innocently led or blindly duped into committing such a folly. Let him spare his words on that score. Let him rather, if he appreciated his obligations as a member of the union, consider how far such obligations had been met in the present situation. Had he not treacherously sacrificed their interests to further his own? How could he longer justify his remaining in the mills or in the union?

Philip, like a skilful general who, secure in his position, draws the fire of the enemy before opening his own, waited patiently until the high-wrought feelings of the men had been given full vent. He then rose, stepped forward to the front of the room, bowed to the chairman and then turned and faced the assembly. His face was pale, but the pallor was much in keeping with the calm yet determined look that his countenance bore; the look of the man of moral courage who, facing a moral crisis, fears nothing except that he may fail in his duty. Slowly sweeping his eyes over the room, which was hushed to a deathlike stillness, he began to speak in a voice in which a slight tremor was noticeable; not the tremor which fear excites, but like that caused by pent-up and repressed energy.

"Fellow members of the union," he said. "As I address you, so I speak to you, as a member of the union. I have been reminded (unnecessarily, I think) of my obligations as a member of the union. Trust me, I have not forgotten them. But from the surprise that has been manifested at my presence here to-night, and the comments that have been made thereon, I am afraid that

one of my privileges as such a member has been overlooked. Let me remind you, then, of that privilege. It is to attend any and all meetings of the union and to freely express my opinion touching any matter that may be the subject of its deliberations. Of that privilege I have availed myself to-night; and had I come, as has been supposed, to advise you to acquiesce in the action which has lately been taken by the company, to so advise you would still be within my privilege; and if I thought that such acquiescence would be for the best interests of the workmen and the union, I should not hesitate to advocate it here and now, in spite of the anger, threats and aspersions which such advocacy might arouse."

"He ain't showin' the white feather, anyway," whispered the belligerent member.

"No, he ain't," assented the man beside him.

"You never saw a man with a high forehead like he's got that didn't have a lot o' backbone to go with it," said the big, burly man.

"'Sh!" came from the wizen-faced little man deprecatingly.

"As a member of the union, then," con-

tinued Philip, after a short pause, "I am here, and I now speak to you. Whether or not that relation is to continue will depend upon your action to-night. I should be sorry to have that relation severed. For the past two years I have gone in and out among you. I have worked beside you in the mills and have taken part in the deliberations of your union. This has been to me an interesting and a valuable experience. So far as I may be said to represent the company, the workmen and the company have touched elbows somewhat after the old way when the employer knew his employees personally and thus established a basis for a better understanding and more amicable relations. The time I have spent in the mill has given me considerable first-hand knowledge of steel manufacturing and of the working conditions in the mill which I could not otherwise so well have gained. The work, too, has proved an excellent physical tonic, one that I can heartily recommend to business and professional men as a specific for tired brain and flagging energies. You who have so much of manual labor may hardly appreciate what a blessing a little of it may be to men who are engaged in sedentary pursuits, or the extent

of the deprivation to men in such pursuits who have none at all. In the better social order of the future perhaps all will have some, certainly none will have too much. It may be trite to speak of the blessing of labor, but I am very much afraid that with quite all of those who have spoken of it and sung of it, it has been but a figure of speech. Practically, labor of the hand has been avoided as if it were a contamination. Men have feared to soil their hands lest in some way they should soil their souls or lose caste with their fellows. And so they have flocked to the confining, if not idle, life of the professions, and overcrowded the occupations supposedly genteel. More genteel have many supposed it to be to make a precarious living by their wits than an assured one by productive labor. The badge of servitude must be taken from labor of the hand, and its dignity, its beauty, its healthfulness and its happiness recognized. Then perhaps we shall have, as a corrective of the congestion in employments that stifle, a dispersion to the health-giving life of the open. We have, of course, as men, differing capacities and aptitudes, and are born to differing environments. These must naturally shape our life's activities,

but they should not fix our social status. In that better social order of the future that I spoke of we shall have a true democracy. There will be no aristocracy but the aristocracy of merit. What you are will determine your status, and not what may happen to be your honest employment. (Applause!)

"All this may appear to be somewhat beside the object and purpose of this meeting; but it will serve to show you in what light I have looked upon my past association with you, and, if you believe me sincere in what I have said, how little likely it is that I should be inspired by the sinister motives that have been attributed to me here to-night. To the personal friends I have among you, whose friendship I prize as highly as any that I have made in the so-called higher walks of life, to these I know that I need make no disclaimer of any such sinister motives. As to others, I must, of course, make allowance for the excited state of feeling over the recent change in the wage scale, and for the quite justifiable inference from my relations to the company that I had a hand in bringing this about. Let me say to you, then—and I expect to be believed when I say it—that I am sorry this wage cut was made; that I had

nothing whatever to do with it; that I did not even know that it was going to be made before it was made. For reasons best known to themselves the powers that be did not take me into their confidence in this matter. They doubtless took it for granted that I would acquiesce in their action and that I would use my influence with you to secure your acquiescence in it. But"—here Philip paused, straightened himself up, and with the terrible earnestness of one casting a fateful die, said: "I do not approve of it; I cannot acquiesce in it, nor am I here to-night to urge you to acquiesce in it!" (Loud applause and cheers!)

"I knew he didn't! I knew he wouldn't!" cried Tenwick, jumping up to cheer, and then dropping into his seat again after making a fruitless clutch at vacancy in the quarter where his coat-tails should have been.

Philip waited for quiet to be restored, and then continued:

"But my duty to you and to the company does not end with the announcement of my attitude on this question. If I am not here to advise you to acquiesce in the action of the company, I am here to counsel you against an offensive rebellion in the shape of a strike.

A strike is war. War is wasteful and destructive. It is a great evil in itself, and should never be resorted to to redress grievances until all the means of a wise diplomacy have been exhausted. So a labor strike ought not to be called until conference, mediation, arbitration, concession and compromise have failed. Recall all the strikes of the past that you have known, and how many of them can you truthfully say were really successful? The strike is the primitive argument of the club, an argument that has never been considered convincing, nor is it ever very formidable, for one side can never have a monopoly of the clubs. And yet, many think that the main purpose of labor unions is to put labor upon a war footing. This is an entirely false notion—damnably false. It is not only false in theory but it is false in fact. In the strongest and best organized unions in the country strikes are of very infrequent occurrence. And why? It is because these unions have the benefit of wise and conservative leadership. Their leaders are not forever emphasizing and thereby perpetuating the enmity between capital and labor, nor are they continually inflaming the passions of their followers by appeals to class hatreds

and prejudices. They realize the terrible waste and destructiveness of strikes, and so are bent upon preventing them rather than promoting them. They are close students of existing industrial conditions, and so, learning what their fellow workmen are entitled to under such conditions, and what they can reasonably ask for, they present and enforce their claims through the peaceful methods of negotiation and agreement. Such should be the policy of all labor unions. The aim should be to make them an intelligent, not a mere brutal force. No matter how strong a union may be it cannot enforce demands which it would be ruinous to the business of the employer to grant. Of course, capital is selfish. Is not labor selfish, too? If capital asks, 'How little can I give,' does not labor ask, 'How much can I get?' But somewhere between these extremes of offer and demand lies the just wage scale, which concedes to the employer a legitimate profit and gives to the laborer a fair return for his labor. The establishment and maintenance of this just wage scale, the constant improvement in the conditions of labor, and the moral, mental and social uplift of the laborer—along these lines should the activities of

labor unions and labor leaders be directed. With activities so directed, labor unions are a useful, a beneficent agency in society, instead of an industrial menace, as unwise leadership has so often made them. Upon demands founded in right and justice they may well be insistent, for 'Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just.' In making such demands they will not only find employers more amenable, but they will be supported and upheld by an intelligent, an active, a powerful public opinion. (Applause!)

"Now, from what I have said you will see how I think you should act in the present emergency: not hastily, but circumspectly. Be first assured of the extent of your rights, and then seek their recognition by the company without recourse to the violent agency of a strike. To this end I want you to authorize me to-night to act as your representative before the company in this matter; not to bind you finally by anything that I may do or say, but rather as a mediator to bring about a reversal of the recent action of the company, or at all events such a modification of it as under the present circumstances shall be fair and just to both workmen and the company.

"You may readily understand that this is not the most pleasant task that, with your sanction, I assign myself. I only do it from an overpowering sense of duty; a duty I owe to you as a member of the union, a duty I owe no less to the company, sustaining the relations to it that I do. I am more anxious than I can tell you that there should be the most friendly relations between the company and its workmen. In order that such friendly relations may be maintained I know that the company must deal justly with you, and that moderation and forbearance should characterize your conduct and attitude toward the company.

"Let me, then, take this commission from you. I have assured you that I am opposed to the wage cut. I think I know why it was made, and the reason for it does not appeal to my conscience as being a valid one. Having taken this stand, I need not, I think, be very urgent in my appeal to you for support, or for the confidence which would be implied in the delegated authority to speak for you. Such confidence will, I know, be an added incentive to the personal responsibility I feel in the matter, to bring the present difference to an amicable and satisfactory adjustment."

(Loud and prolonged applause!)

The effect of Philip's speech was most marked. The spectacle of the son of the president of the company championing the cause of the workmen in the matter of wages was certainly a novel and inspiring one, and such promised intercession seemed to assure to the workmen a favorable issue of the wage dispute. Philip's proposal, therefore, met with general and enthusiastic approval, and by resolution of the union he was empowered to represent the union in a conference with the company officials, and to report to the union the result of such conference at a meeting to be held the following week, further action by the union on the subject of the wage cut to be deferred until that time.

Philip was busy for some time after the meeting in receiving the thanks and words of encouragement from the workmen who crowded around him. Aaron Gilks, however, was not of this number. He hastily left the hall at the close of the meeting, only remarking cynically to a group of men as he passed out: "Oh, he means well enough, but it's dollars to doughnuts he's going on a fool's errand."

CHAPTER XVII

Father and Son

The prospect of Philip's accomplishing what he had undertaken could not, certainly, have been said to be very bright, especially since his father had had a conference with Mr. Hartland, and had been much fortified by that gentleman's very timely suggestions and encouragement.

The mutinous feeling among the workmen over the wage cut and the special meeting of the union that was called to take action upon it, had occasioned Mr. Middleton some uneasiness, and he had sought an early interview with Mr. Hartland.

"There's a storm brewing over this thing," he said to him. "The mill hands seem to be pretty much cut up about it, and a special meeting of their union has been called to consider it. We shall doubtless hear from them shortly."

"Oh, I guess the storm will blow over," said Mr. Hartland confidently. "This is a poor time for them to quarrel with their bread

and butter. There are plenty of men out of work just now ready to take the places of any that want to quit, and they know it."

"Yes, men are plentiful enough, certainly," said Mr. Middleton. "Hardly a day passes now that we don't have applications for work. Still, all the workmen are union men, and if the union should order a strike they would all have to quit at once, and this, I am afraid, would seriously embarrass us. Suppose the union calls a strike?"

"Then we'll find a way to stop it," replied Mr. Hartland in a defiant tone, as if already confronted by the suggested emergency. "We're not hiring the union, and it's got no right to interfere between us and the men who are willing to work for the wages we choose to pay. We don't want to recognize the union in this matter at all. It's an irresponsible organization, run by a lot of hotheads that are always stirring the men up to making demands they wouldn't think of making if left to themselves. I'd like to break it up. We'll never have things running smoothly until we have a non-union mill. This may be a good time to bring that about. Certainly it's no time to listen to any demands that the union may make, or to parley with

it at all. If we do, we'll only be giving it the whip-hand of us, and we might just as well turn the management of the company over to it at once and be done with it. But I guess we're not ready to do that just yet."

"No, hardly," said Mr. Middleton, laughing. "There wouldn't be many dividends paid in that case, I imagine."

"Then let's stand pat," said Mr. Hartland, bringing his fist down on his desk in emphasis. "We hold the best cards just now. If we're going to have a fight with the union we couldn't have it at a better time. The country is full of men looking for work, and we shouldn't have any trouble keeping the mills running even if there was a general walk-out."

Mr. Middleton felt considerably reassured. Still, he had no desire to try conclusions with the workmen, and so hoped the storm raised among them by the wage cut would blow over, as Mr. Hartland predicted. His position was not unlike that of the man who, without forethought, has heavily loaded his wagon, and then begins to fear a possible breakdown.

He now bethought himself of Philip; and on the morning following the special meeting

of the workmen's union he summoned him into his private office. He thus anticipated Philip's call upon him.

"Now for it," said Philip to himself determinedly as he entered the office and closed the door behind him.

For a moment he stood with his hand on the door-knob and looked at his father. In that brief moment duty had a final struggle with affection. Not until then had he had such a realizing sense of the nature and possible consequences of his self-imposed task. What was he about to do? Set himself in opposition to his own father. The thought of espousing the cause of the workmen as against the company was much more supportable when the company was considered abstractly as an impersonal thing than when it became personified in its president, and such espousal seemed to demand a sacrifice of filial respect and obedience. Philip was certainly not wanting in these last-named virtues, and this only made his present position the more trying. But he could not now retreat, any more than the brave soldier who rushes forward in a charge can turn about at the moment of impact with the enemy. His honor, moreover, was now involved, for he

came with an embassy from the union which must be honorably discharged.

No, he must not flinch.

His perturbation of mind, however, could not be entirely disguised, and the evidence of it must have been noticed by his father had not the latter's thoughts been just then otherwise engaged.

There are moments in life when, under the stress of excitement or deep feeling, inherited resemblances become more clearly marked in the face. As Mr. Middleton now looked at his son he was struck with his remarkable likeness to his mother; and the thought caused a lump to come into his throat. He had her dark hair and eyes, and the same straight, faultless nose. But aside from the general resemblance of feature there was a certain intangible something that could be felt but not described which pervaded the features and which called up to Mr. Middleton the one woman—the one being—whose soul seemed to be indissolubly linked with his own, and whose untimely death had never seemed to him other than a heartless tragedy.

For the brief instant that the memory of Philip's mother was strong upon him; so vivid, indeed, that she appeared visualized

before him, Mr. Middleton experienced a wave of generous emotion. But this passed as quickly as it came. Other and more normal thoughts obtruded, and thought and feeling again became set to their accustomed channels.

As in physics so in the realm of mind and character there is a *vis inertiæ* which carries one along the straight, undeviating line of habit, of acquired tendencies; and impulse, emotion, spasmodic feeling, avail not for any permanent deflection.

And so it was with Mr. Middleton, now. The generous, conciliatory mood into which his momentary emotion had thrown him was gone, and he was again the cold man of business; the president of the Ellerton Iron & Steel Works.

"Sit down, Phil," he said with a wave of his hand toward a chair, and in a voice which showed no trace of his recent emotion, "I want to talk to you about the mill men. As you know, we've had to make a considerable reduction in wages. The men, I understand, are not taking the cut with very good grace, and may give us some trouble over it. They held a meeting last night, I believe, to consider the matter. Now, you stand in with

the men pretty well, Phil, and can therefore be of considerable assistance to us just now in allaying their discontent and reconciling them to the situation."

Philip had seated himself. Throwing his right leg over his left, clutching his knee with his hands and giving his chair a tilt backward, he said calmly: "In order to do that I should first have to be reconciled to it myself."

"You? What do you mean?" asked his father in surprise.

"I mean that I don't think the heavy wage cut the company has made is quite fair or just to the workmen; and as I don't approve of it, I can't, of course, urge the men to accept it or to become reconciled to it."

Mr. Middleton looked his astonishment.

"You don't approve of it!" he burst out. "Well, why don't you? Don't you know that we've got to retrench if we're going to declare our regular dividend next month?"

"Yes, I suppose we have in order to declare a dividend. But why deciare the dividend—why not pass it?"

"Pass it! Are you crazy? We might as well shut up shop."

"No, I'm not crazy," said Philip quietly. "My suggestion may, perhaps, seem a little

unusual from a strictly business point of view. But in cutting wages to pay a dividend are we not generous to the stockholders at the expense of the workmen? Are we not robbing Peter to pay Paul?"

"We're robbing nobody," Mr. Middleton replied with growing heat. "Even with the twenty per cent cut we're paying the men more than we need to pay in the present condition of the labor market. There are plenty of men that would be only too glad to go into the mills at the wages we are now paying."

"That may be," said Philip, "but shouldn't we consider the fact that most of the men now on the payrolls have been with us a long time, and, with a very few exceptions, have received no increase of pay during the two or three years past when the profits of the company have been exceptionally large. Is it fair to the men to make them now bear the brunt of a dull market in order to protect the stockholders? I know I'm perfectly willing to forego a dividend on my stock, or even two, if necessary, to restore the former wage scale."

"Well, if you are, I'm not," Mr. Middleton retorted; "and Mr. Hartland isn't, and I don't think any of the other stockholders are.

"Look here, Phil," he continued with impatience, "you can't run this business, or any business, on Sunday-school principles. So long as we pay going wages it's all we ought to be asked to pay, and it's all that good business sense dictates that we should pay. Any of the men who are dissatisfied with the pay can quit.

"I guess there won't be many that will quit, though," he added with a grim smile. "This is a poor time to give up a job, no matter what it pays. Our men will, perhaps, make a lot of fuss over this for a while, but they will end by swallowing their medicine, even if they do make a wry face over it. Of course, we'd rather not have any trouble with the men, and you could have been of considerable assistance to us, Phil, in smoothing things over with them. But with your peculiar notions, it's very evident that we can't expect much help from you in that direction.

"That's all I wanted to see you about, Phil," he said coldly, and swung around to his desk in sign of dismissal.

It would have been well, perhaps, if the interview had ended at this point. Thus far there had been little more than the natural friction between father and son caused by

their entertaining different views in regard to the policy to be pursued by the company toward the workmen. If Philip's attitude was disappointing to his father it was not greatly disquieting. He regarded it as but the ingenuous generosity of inexperience, which, if it did not give way to a cooler sober sense, would certainly not assert itself obnoxiously. But how, now, when that attitude assumed the character of active opposition, as the facts connected with the previous night's meeting of the union would disclose?

The little encouragement he had thus far received made Philip dread the outcome of such disclosure. He would fain have deferred it; but he realized that nothing could be gained by deferring it, and that the best way to perform a disagreeable duty is to perform it speedily. With a resolute muster of courage, therefore, he said:

"Father, I attended the meeting of the workmen's union last night."

"You did!" his father ejaculated. "That's a strange thing for you to be doing at this time. I hope you didn't air any of your foolish notions before the men."

"I spoke to the men, yes, but I hope that what I said was not foolish. I found them

"Traitor!" he cried.

very much wrought up over the wage cut, and quite ready to walk out on a strike. I held them in check by assuring them that I was opposed to the wage cut myself, and that I would do all that I could to get the company to rescind its action. They voted to let me represent them in negotiations with the company, and to await a report from me at a meeting next week. I should have called on you, father, in regard to the matter if you hadn't called me in this morning."

Mr. Middleton looked at his son in amazement. Then rising from his chair he took a few steps across the floor and turned toward him angrily:

"So this is what you've been doing, is it? Instead of helping us you've been backing the men. What do you get for playing the traitor?"

Stung to the quick, Philip sprang to his feet.

"Traitor!" he cried. "You are my father or you should answer speedily for that insult. In what way am I a traitor, pray? Because I want the company to act fairly toward its workmen? Because I have stepped in and checked a threatened strike and given the company an opportunity to adjust the trouble peaceably?"

"I don't know how else to characterize your conduct, Phil," his father retorted hotly. "You are in the service of the company, and instead of using your influence with the men to get them to acquiesce in the wage cut, you ally yourself with them and encourage them in a revolt against it. You may not call this treachery to the company, but it looks very much like it to me. I don't care what you call it. It's reprehensible conduct on your part, Phil, and something I didn't expect from you.

"Checked a strike?" he went on; "why, you've only encouraged one. What must the men think when they see one sustaining the relations to me and to the company that you do, himself opposing, instead of supporting, the company? If you wanted to promote a strike you couldn't have gone about it in a better way. A fine mess you've made of it."

"What I've done I'll stand to," said Philip stoutly. "I consider the wage cut unjust to the workmen, and unnecessary. In asking, on behalf of the men, that it be rescinded I am simply asking that you and Mr. Hartland, who own the bulk of the company's stock, forego an extra figure on your bank account in order that the workmen and their families

may continue to have sugar in their coffee and butter on their bread!"

"Sugar in their coffee—fiddlesticks!" retorted Mr. Middleton contemptuously.

"You're using fine phrases, Phil, but not common sense. The men will have plenty of sugar for their coffee and butter for their bread if they don't waste their wages on beer, or throw them away in other directions. I know them better than you seem to. For the most part they are an improvident lot. They seldom have anything to show for their time-checks three days after pay day."

"They find plenty of places to put their money, I have no doubt," said Philip; "and if some of them do spend a little money foolishly, they do not differ in that particular from plenty of other people who have more of it. That's certainly no excuse for lessening the amount they have to spend."

"Well, we're not looking for excuses," replied his father. "They're not necessary." Then decisively: "This thing is done, Phil, and it isn't going to be undone. Since you've taken upon yourself to act as an emissary of the union I will do you the honor of recognizing it to the extent of giving you an answer as its representative. Go back and tell the men

that the wage cut goes; that it will neither be rescinded nor will there be any modification of it. And tell them, further, that we will receive no further communications or listen to any further demands from the union. Our contractual relations are with the men, not with the union, and only with the men personally will we have any dealings in the future.

"And, Phil," he added in an admonitory tone as he seated himself at his desk, "let this be the end of your absurd and ridiculous association with the workmen. I want you to get out of the mill—get out of the union. We can't afford to have a man of your peculiar notions mixing with the men and setting them at cross-purposes with us. I see now that Mr. Hartland was quite right when he opposed your working in the mill in the first place. But I never dreamed of your giving us any trouble. I thought you had too much sense. You should have sense enough, Phil, to see that you can't carry water on both shoulders in the way you're trying to do. The time will come when much of the responsibility of the company's management will fall on your shoulders, and you'll never make a success of this business unless you

get over your foolish and callow altruism. Don't be over-solicitous for the workmen or waste your sympathy on them. They'll get along all right in their own way. You won't owe them anything except what you've agreed to pay them for their day's work.

"Now leave me, Phil," he said coldly, "and let me get a lot of this stuff out of the way that's on my desk. I've wasted too much time this morning already."

"I'm sorry to have to take any more of your time, father," said Philip determinedly; "but it will not be wasted. The situation is more serious, I think, than you suspect. The men are, as I told you, very much wrought up over this matter. I have encouraged them to expect some concessions from the company, and if I go back to them empty-handed it will simply precipitate a strike. The company can ill afford this; it can much better afford to raise wages."

"If you talk of what we can and can't afford," returned his father, heatedly, "I tell you we can't afford to take water in this thing. If we give an inch now, we'll have to give an ell by and by. The company can better afford to fight the union than surrender to it or accede to any of its demands.

If you have encouraged the men to expect any concessions from us, you can square yourself by going back and discouraging such expectation. Because you have committed a blunder is no reason why you should persist in it, or that the company should support you in it."

"I have not blundered!" cried Philip, giving rein to a combative impulse. "The company has blundered; and it will commit a still greater blunder if it does not now meet the men in a friendly spirit and try to come to an amicable agreement with them."

Mr. Middleton was plainly nettled. Turning around in his chair so that he faced his son, he said, with fist doubled emphatically upon his knee:

"See here, Phil! Enough of this! The company needs you at your desk more than it needs your advice. If a blunder has been made the responsibility is mine, not yours. You are not running this business—not yet; and, unless you acquire more business sense than you have now, you never will run it. What I have said is final. The only terms we propose to make with the men are embraced in the new wage scale. If they don't want to accept let them call for their time."

Having delivered himself of what he supposed put a period to the discussion, Mr. Middleton swung back to his desk, took up a paper cutter and viciously attacked a large sealed packet which lay to his hand, his temper, the while, finding vent in angry mutterings.

Philip, however, did not go. Instead, he sat down at the table in the room, seized a pen and hastily scratched off a few lines upon a writing-pad that lay on the table. The determination depicted on his face seemed to be communicated to his pen, which scraped harshly over the paper and with an ominous sound.

Rising from the table he tore the written sheet from the pad, stepped over to his father and placed it on his desk in front of him.

It was his resignation of his position with the company!

His father read the paper and then sat and stared at it for a moment in apparent stupefaction.

"What does this mean?" he gasped in dismay.

"Just what it says," replied Philip calmly. "I am not likely to acquire any better or different business sense than I have now,

and so am simply anticipating a consequence that you think likely to result from that fact."

Mr. Middleton was furious. Snatching up the resignation he tore it to pieces and threw it into the waste-basket.

"You fool!" he cried, rising from his chair and pacing the floor. "Do you know what you are doing? Do you know what it means for you to leave the company? Do you wish to surrender all claim to my future bounty? You are my son, and I must protect you from your own folly. Go back to your desk, sir!"

"No!" said Philip firmly. "You have my resignation. If you wish me to recall it, let me go back to the men and tell them that the wage cut will be rescinded. I may not know all that it means to leave the company, but I do know what it means to remain with it if its present policy toward the workmen is to be continued. It means that I shall be supporting and profiting by a policy which my conscience does not approve."

"Your conscience!" Mr. Middleton's lip curled scornfully. "You seem to be long on conscience but short on common sense." Then, testily: "I'm blessed if I know where

you get your absurd sentimentalism from."

"I don't think you need to feel any responsibility for it," Philip replied with just a touch of sarcasm in his voice. Then in a softened tone: "Perhaps I get it from my mother. I never knew her, but I have always loved her."

It was a body-blow, though unintended.

A momentarily poignant remembrance of his early loss caused Mr. Middleton's face to pale. He clutched his chair for support and then sank into it, breathing heavily.

"Your mother, boy," he cried hoarsely, "had she lived, would never have crossed me the way her son is doing now!"

"No," assented Philip, with emotion, "for had she lived it would not have been necessary."

Down deep in his heart Mr. Middleton must have felt the truth of this. Had she lived to rule over him with the sanction of love's law, would he, indeed, have become so completely absorbed in money-getting; so narrowed in his sympathies that charity, equity and mercy made but feeble appeal against the spirit of gain that mastered him?

It may have been the consciousness of this that now served to embitter him.

"No, it would not have been necessary!" he cried fiercely. "Nor would you think it necessary now if you were not deluded by your highfalutin notions about conscience and duty Duty? Do you owe no duty to me, sir? What claims to your consideration have the workmen as compared with mine? All that you have I have given you, and much of what you will have in the future will come from me. Gratitude, if nothing else, should impel you to obedience!"

"I shall always be grateful for what I have received at your hands, father," said Philip with feeling; "and if I do not obey you now it is because obedience would demand of me the sacrifice of what I hold dearer than your favor."

"Go, then!" cried his father, springing from his chair and pointing to the door, his anger reaching its climacteric of rage. "Go! But know that when you leave the company you leave my roof! Go, if you will; try life on your own account, and see if you will be as generous with your own money as you are with mine! Take conscience and duty with you, mix them well with your business, and find out for yourself what poor commercial assets they are, and what excellent

"Go, then! Go!"

passports to the poorhouse! Go, and feed on husks, if you will, but don't come back until you are ready to come on your knees for my forgiveness!"

"As you will, father," said Philip quietly. And turning on his heel he left the room.

Half an hour later his father emerged from his private office and found him gone!

CHAPTER XVIII

Partings, Sad and Otherwise. In which, also, Mr. Hartland Shears a Lamb —so He Thinks

On leaving his father's private office, Philip went straight to his desk, gathered up a few private papers and closed it. He then went to the safe, opened it, and took out his certificates of stock in the company (fifty shares) and put them in his pocket. Then going over to Mr. Cosgrove, the company's secretary, he handed him his desk key.

"Give this to my successor, Mr. Cosgrove, for I am leaving the company," he said.

"Leaving the company!" Mr. Cosgrove exclaimed aghast.

"Yes. Father and I have had a falling out."

"You'll come back, though, won't you?" said Mr. Cosgrove in a voice in which there was a note of pleading.

"I guess not," replied Philip. "The conditions father has imposed for my return are such as to make it extremely improbable."

"I don't know how I'm going to get along without you," said Mr. Cosgrove ruefully.

"Perhaps the president of the company will be able to advise you on that point," answered Philip somewhat sarcastically. At the same time he shook hands with the secretary warmly as he bade him good-bye; and taking a parting and not unregretful look about the room that for a half-dozen years had been the scene of his labors, he walked out, leaving the secretary to wondering speculation as to the cause of this most unexpected event.

Leaving the office building Philip went into the mill. One of the first men he encountered was Superintendent Mitchell. Extending his hand he said:

"Good-bye, Mr. Mitchell. I am leaving the company to-day, and so shall be compelled to give up my job in the mill."

"*Is* that so?" exclaimed Mitchell, taking Philip's outstretched hand and giving it a vise-like grip. "Well, well! this is kind o' suddent, ain't it?"

"Yes, it is rather sudden, I must confess."

"Well," said Mitchell, "it ain't anny of my business to ask ye why y're lavin', but mebbe ye've been too much on the side o'

the min about their pay to suit some of the people over there"—jerking his head in the direction of the office building, and looking at Philip shrewdly.

"Well, maybe something like that is at the bottom of it," replied Philip smiling.

"I thought so," said Mitchell, with a short laugh. "Well," he said, giving Philip a cordial slap on the shoulder, "ye've played square with the b'ys and they're all yer frinds, ivery wan of thim, an' I wish ye good luck wheriver ye go."

"Thank you for saying so," said Philip.

"An' if ye iver want a ricommind as a roller I'll give ye a good wan," said Mitchell, with a broad grin.

"All right. Thanks!" said Philip with a laugh, as he turned and went on toward the rolls to do a still harder thing, which was to take leave of Waters and Tenwick.

"Waters," he said gravely, after having called him to one side, "I'm going on a vacation—a long one. In fact I don't know when I shall come back."

Waters paled and passed his hand over his face in his usual gesture of agitation.

"I see how 'tis," he said sadly. "You've been thrown down trying to help us."

"Oh, well, if I have I'll get up again," said Philip in a tone he meant to be cheerful. "But I hate to see you go back to your long hours again."

"They won't be as long as they were before you came into the mill, sir," said Waters with feeling, "for I'm not quite the same man I was then. But I'd rather put three more on top of the twelve than have any trouble come to you, sir."

"Oh, don't worry about me," said Philip, cheerfully. "I'll get along all right." And then with a laugh, "I have a trade now, you know, that I can fall back on."

"Sure, you're a first-class roller all right," said Waters smiling; "but I shouldn't like to see you compelled to earn your living in a rolling mill."

"I might do worse," said Philip, half seriously. "But I probably sha'n't be compelled to take up the tongs. I have some money; enough, I think, to push that invention of yours, and perhaps we shall both make some money out of that."

Waters's face brightened. "I had not thought of that," he said. "I hope you can do something with it, for your own sake, anyway."

"Well, I am going to try."

He then shook hands with Waters warmly, and walked with him over to the rolls where Tenwick was standing.

Out of earshot though Tenwick was, Philip's apparently earnest talk with Waters had not been lost upon him, and the final handshake gave him a foreboding of the unwelcome truth. Tears came into his eyes when Philip confirmed his suspicions.

"I sh'd 'a knowd it couldn't last," he said in a broken voice; "but that don't make your goin' any the easier."

He paused a moment, struggling to control his feelings. Then leaning heavily upon his grappling tongs and half averting his face, he continued:

"Mr. Middleton, people call me childish; and I guess mebbe that's what I am, fur I ain't quit actin' and feelin' just like I did when I was a kid. Your comin' into the mill and goin' away again takes me back to somethin' 'at happened when I was a little bit of a tad just able to toddle around. Dad brought home a little dog one night fur me an' my little sister to play with. We must 'a been awful poor them days, fur we lived in two rooms upstairs in a house in a part

o' town where a carriage was a mighty uncommon sight. We didn't have many playthings, me an' my sister didn't, an' I can't tell you what that little dog was to us. We'd play with him by the hour, he as fond of us seemin'ly as we was o' him. Well, we hadn't had him only a little while when one day I looked out o' the window and see a fine carriage comin' up the street, a man with a high hat up on a high seat a-drivin'. He stopped his horses at our house, got down an' opened the carriage door, an' out comes a young woman all dressed up as fine as you ever see. She stopped a minute or two downstairs, to ask some questions likely, an' then she come up an' knocked at our door. Mother opened the door an' in stepped this fine lady holdin' her skirts high, an' what did she do but just grab that little dog 'thout any ifs or an's, only sayin' the dog belonged to her, an' then turnin' an' skippin' down the stairs again, me an' my little sister runnin' after her a-hollerin' an' a-cryin'. Mother pulled us back, tellin' us the lady was the owner of the dog. I didn't see what difference that made. We needed the dog more'n she did, an' she might 'a left him with us or promised to send us another; but we never saw the

lady or the dog again, ner never heard from her after that.

"Now, of course, Mr. Middleton, your goin' away ain't just like losin' that little dog," said Tenwick with a half smile, conscious of the not very flattering parallel. "Tain't that; although I couldn't feel much worse than I did then. But it ain't that I'm thinkin' of so much. It's what you've been to us here in the mill. You've been so different from that young woman, sir. I ain't never got over that little dog affair. I ain't seen much o' rich people in my time, but I growed up with the idee that they was of a sort to take things away from us. You ain't been like that, sir; ner you ain't been like most of 'em even when they do want to give us anything, you ain't stood off an' throwed it at us. You ain't held yer skirts high fur fear you'd touch us. You've come right among us. You've give us more'n anything else, sir; you've give us yourself. An' I tell you, sir"—this with a burst of feeling—"we 'preciate it even if we can't tell it ner show it; an' if we are a bit cut up about our wages just now, we'd be willin' to work for less if it 'ud only keep you with us."

Philip was touched. His own eyes were

moist as he took Tenwick's hand and wrung it.

"God bless you, Tom!" he said feelingly. "Your little dog never came back, but maybe I will some day. I'm glad to know that I've been of some comfort to you; but my being with you in the mill has done me good, too."

And as Philip stood for a moment, holding Tom's hand and looking into his homely but honest face, he had a sudden and vivid consciousness of human brotherhood, and his own culture, education and social position seemed not such great barriers to fellowship with the unlettered but noble-hearted man who stood before him.

Hardly master of his feelings, he hurried from the mill, stopping only long enough to say to Waters that he would make a report by letter to the union touching the matter that had been intrusted to him the night before, and requesting Waters to so advise any of the men who might make inquiries about it.

Waters and Tenwick made sad work of the next bar that they put through the rolls. They missed grips with their tongs. Their swinging movements were ill-timed. The bar repeatedly missed the grooves, and doubled

up, requiring the constant use of the hammers to straighten it.

When they had finally put it through the last roll they cast a furtive glance at each other. It was enough to show that the same thought was uppermost in the minds of both. Tom dropped his tongs and seized Waters's hand, the tears standing in his eyes.

"He'll come back, don't you think?" he said with a convulsive sob.

"Let's hope he will, Tom," replied Waters consolingly.

Oh, the consolation of such a hope! Amid all the sad partings among all the sons and daughters of men how that hope rims with light the cloud of sorrow that gathers dark upon the horizon of life!

Philip took a car for town and on reaching the city went straight to the Commercial Bank. Asking for Mr. Hartland he was directed to the back room of the bank. He entered this room just as a man with a crest-fallen countenance was about to come out. This man was, in fact, one of the human flies that Mr. Hartland had been exercising his spider instincts upon. He had come to try to get a renewal or at least an extension of the mortgage that Mr. Hartland held upon

his home. But Mr. Hartland was not now renewing mortgages. He was foreclosing them. He appreciated fully the present tightness of the money market, and how difficult it would be for his debtors to get hold of the necessary money either to pay off their mortgages or redeem their property after foreclosure; and so, having seen to it in the beginning that the margin of value of the property over the loan was a large one, he was now insisting upon immediate payment of principal and interest on mortgages when due, and promptly instituting foreclosure proceedings where there was a default. There was hardly an issue of the *Ellerton Argus* in which one of his foreclosure advertisements was not running.

The man with crestfallen countenance passed out, and Philip, with a formal "good-morning," took a chair facing Mr. Hartland, who was seated at a heavy walnut table in the middle of the room.

He was a thick, dumpy-looking man, was Mr. Hartland, with a large head which was set into his shoulders, giving him a sort of hunched look. The baldness on the top of his head was somewhat concealed by the sprays of gray hair which came up from both

sides and interlaced. The lower part of his face was covered by a close-trimmed gray beard which was matched by a pair of bushy eyebrows that almost hid his small, piercing eyes. An affection of the orbicular muscle of the eyelid caused his left eye to stay at a half-close, giving him the appearance of continually winking—a thing quite inconsistent with Mr. Hartland's character, for he had little sense of humor. His physiognomy was not, indeed, prepossessing, and might at some time in his life have suggested to him the soliloquy of the Duke of Gloucester. He certainly was not made to court an amorous looking-glass, and therefore had, perhaps, determined to prove a —money-maker.

"Mr. Hartland," said Philip, proceeding at once to business, "I resigned my position with the company this morning, and am going to leave the city. I wish, therefore, to dispose of my mill stock. I have fifty shares. Do you want to buy them?"

Schooled as Mr. Hartland was in the suppression of feeling, he found it exceedingly difficult to conceal his exultation over this announcement. Ever since Philip went into the mill as a workman he had been a thorn in Mr. Hartland's side. He had been

altogether too solicitous about the welfare of the men to suit him; and with such a solicitude he was a constantly disturbing element (in Mr. Hartland's eyes) in the mill management. Mr. Hartland found Mr. Middleton far more tractable than he expected to find Philip when the latter should assume, as he no doubt would in the future, if he remained with the company, a measure of responsibility and authority in the management of the mills.

Philip had, therefore, come to the proper party to dispose of his stock. Mr. Hartland was quite ready to take it. Aside from his desire to increase his stock holdings—as well for a profitable investment as to augment his authority in the company—he realized that if Philip parted with his stock his relations with the company would be effectually severed.

At the same time Mr. Hartland saw the opportunity for a good bargain.

"What do you want for your stock?" he asked without the slightest show of eagerness.

"Oh, I don't know," replied Philip. "I've never tried to sell any before. You know better than I do what it is worth."

It was very likely that Mr. Hartland did have such superior knowledge. But did Philip think that he would give what he knew the

stock was worth if he could get it for less? If he did he had something to learn about that gentleman's way of doing business. Mr. Hartland did know pretty well what Ellerton mill stock was worth. He knew that it was exceedingly valuable stock. For the past ten years it had not paid less than twenty per cent and had paid as high as fifty per cent annually. But, after the manner of the shrewd trafficker who depreciates the article he wishes to buy, he said carelessly:

"Well, the stock isn't worth as much as it was a year or two ago. Times are hard now, and money is tight. I might take the stock, but I shouldn't want to give more than par for it."

Philip reflected a moment. "The company expects to pay a semi-annual dividend of ten per cent next month, I believe," he said. "If you take my stock you will demand and accept that dividend on this stock, I presume?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Hartland, not understanding the drift of such an apparently unnecessary question.

"I think I ought to have that dividend, then," said Philip; "and if you will give me the par value of the stock with the amount of that dividend added, you may have it."

"Whew!" Mr. Hartland said to himself. Here was a lamb, surely. Ellerton mill stock was not on the market; but if it had been it would have been quoted at not less than three hundred and fifty; and here was a holder of the stock letting it go at par with a paltry ten per cent added!

Still showing no eagerness, Mr. Hartland lost no time in proceeding to put the shears upon this little lamb.

"I understand, then," he said, "that you offer your shares for $5500?"

"Yes."

"Well," said Mr. Hartland with a show of hesitation, "as you are going away and are anxious to dispose of your stock, I don't mind accommodating you. I guess I can come out even on it at what you offer it for. Have you the certificates with you?"

Philip produced them.

Mr. Hartland looked them over carefully.

"All right," he said. "Fill out and sign the assignments on the back."

Philip drew up to the table and filled out the assignments while Mr. Hartland stepped to the door leading into the cashier's room and called the cashier in.

"Mr. Brown, Mr. Middleton is transferring

to me the stock represented by these certificates, and I would like to have you sign your name as a witness to the transfer."

After Philip had filled out and signed the transfers, the cashier duly affixed his name to the assignments as a witness.

Mr. Hartland took up the certificates, scrutinized the assignments and signatures, and, apparently satisfied, handed them to the cashier, saying:

"Please have these transfers entered on the company's stock register, Mr. Brown."

The cashier took the certificates and retired.

Mr. Hartland then took out his check book and drew his check to Philip's order for $5500 and handed it to him.

"Do you want that certified?" he asked, prompted to a little pleasantry by the exceedingly good bargain he thought he had made.

"No, I guess your check is good for that amount," replied Philip in the same vein. "But I shall soon find out, for I am going to deposit it right away and draw against it."

"I guess you'll find it good," said Mr. Hartland with a grim smile. "None of my paper has gone to protest yet, and a good deal of it has been for larger amounts than you have there."

"Well," returned Philip, "you have the advantage over most men; you can draw on the bank's funds in a pinch."

Mr. Hartland gave Philip a quick, searching look. A joke, of course.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed. "That's so."

But there was little merriment in his laugh, so little, indeed, that the joke must have been of dubious relish.

Now, having sheared the lamb, Mr. Hartland was quite ready to have it run away and play; so he turned to the papers on his table, saying:

"Well, good-bye, Phil. You'll be back in Ellerton again, I presume, after you've spent your money."

"That's quite possible, Mr. Hartland. It isn't such a bad town to raise money in if you happen to have a little stock you want to unload."

With this parting shot Philip left the room, leaving Mr. Hartland to wonder if this last remark was intended as a joke, too.

Now, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that Philip, from his knowledge of the temper of the mill workmen, may have become apprehensive that the obstinate attitude which the company seemed bent upon

assuming toward them might bring about a state of things that would make his stock less valuable, and that this moved him, as a matter of prudence, to dispose of it. If so, it was not likely that he had any qualms of conscience in unloading his shares upon Mr. Hartland at a fair price; for he was sure that Mr. Hartland, more than his father, was responsible for the company's attitude.

If it may seem a little strange that a man like Mr. Hartland should not have thought of the possibility of the fall in value of mill stock from the above-mentioned cause, and so been disinclined to take Philip's stock off his hands, it should be remembered that shrewd, cunning and grasping men have been known to sometimes overreach themselves; that incessant money-grubbing so narrows the sympathies and blunts the moral sense in men that they become blind to the larger relations and ultimate reachings of things; that is to say, that like certain well-known animals of grubbing propensities they often do not see any further than their own noses.

So that, if it turned out that in this little stock transaction in the back parlor of the Commercial Bank Philip really held the shears and Mr. Hartland was the lamb—or old

ram—why, then, this would only be another illustration of the fact that there are exceptions to all rules; and that the children of light are sometimes wiser than the children of this world.

From Mr. Hartland's room Philip went to the receiving teller's window and deposited the check. Then getting the exact amount of his account—for he had a snug sum on deposit besides the amount of Mr. Hartland's check—he drew out necessary travelling money and bought exchange with all but $500 of the rest. For this $500 he drew his check payable to the treasurer of the mill workers' union. This check he inclosed in a letter which he wrote later in the day, addressed to the members of the union, in which he advised them of the failure of his intercession in their behalf; but counselling them to patience and moderation in conduct to the end that they might yet after a time obtain for themselves concessions from the company that he had failed to get for them. He regretted, he wrote, that he could not remain with them to render them whatever aid he could in their present difficulty; but they could, of course, see that having severed his connection with the company, he had perfectly valid

reasons for leaving Ellerton. It was possible, however, that his going away might help them as much as would his remaining to carry on an unfilial conflict with his own father.

He closed his letter by saying that inasmuch as the main reason for the reduction of the wages of the men was that the company should be enabled to pay a dividend, he, as a stockholder, could show the sincerity of his opposition to such a policy in no better way than by turning back to the men the amount of that dividend on his stock, and he therefore inclosed his check for $500, which sum he directed should be placed to the credit of the emergency and sick-benefit fund of the union.

On leaving the bank Philip went home. On the way to his room he met Edith on the stairs.

"Hello!" she cried. "What brings you home at this time of day?"

"Something that will take me away again soon," he answered gravely, putting his arm around her affectionately, "and for a long time. Come to my room, Edith."

Edith followed him to his room in apprehensive expectancy.

He closed the door and told her all.

"O Phil!" she cried, throwing her arms about his neck and bursting into tears. "You musn't go! You can't go! It's all a mistake! Father didn't mean it! Wait and let me see him!"

Philip gently disengaged her arms.

"Yes, I guess he meant it, Edith, but if he didn't, I did. I simply can't stay with the company with its present policy, and it looks as if that policy were fixed. It's best that I should go away."

Finding her further entreaties unavailing to deter him from his purpose, Edith sat down disconsolately.

"Where are you going, Phil?" she asked.

A faint color came into Philip's cheeks.

"I don't know where I shall land permanently," he said somewhat evasively; "but when I do get settled I'll write to you. Come, now, Edith, cheer up, and help me pack my things."

Somewhat consoled by the prospect of soon hearing from him, Edith went about the melancholy work of assisting him to pack his trunks and suit cases.

When the packing was completed, Philip telephoned to an expressman to come and get his baggage and take it to the station. Then

giving his sister a last embrace, he sought out Mrs. Middleton, while Edith went to her own room and had another cry by herself.

If Philip's parting from Mrs. Middleton was a less trying ordeal than the one he had just passed through, it must be remembered that she was his stepmother. But this—when we take into account the many excellent stepmothers upon this broad planet—is not so much to the point. Not so much so as the fact that while the relations between Philip and his stepmother had for years been necessarily close, their sympathies as regarded each other were of a kind that might properly have been termed "imperfect." Partings in such cases, while they may be attended with some regrets, have their counterbalancing consolations.

If, therefore, Philip's leave-taking from his stepmother was somewhat abbreviated and more the performance of a duty than susceptible of other characterization, the circumstances of the case may excuse him. And if he likewise failed to detail to her the events of the day that had led up to his determination to leave home, for this he may also be excused, since he may have desired to spare himself the comments which she would, in

all probability, have made upon his behavior. He may have thought, too, that his father would be quite likely to enlighten her as to such events, accompanying the recital of them with certain comments of his own thereon that would doubtless be quite agreeable to her ear.

But if Philip felt no great pulling at his heart strings in parting from his stepmother, he did have such a feeling a little later when he emerged from the house. His dog—a beautiful animal, a cross between a shepherd and a Newfoundland—came bounding toward him. He now had a better appreciation of Tenwick's feelings when his dog was taken from him.

Philip had become possessed of this dog several years before, and under rather peculiar circumstances. Walking homeward one evening, he came upon some boys who were engaged in attaching a tin can to the dog's tail, a pastime from which boys seem to get considerable amusement, but the humor of which, it is safe to say, no dog similarly circumstanced has ever been able to fathom. Sharply lecturing the boys for their cruelty—for the sight of cruelty to dumb animals pained him, more, even, than the sight of

cruelty to human beings—he drove them away and released the dog, then little more than a puppy. After stopping a moment to pat the little fellow's head he went on his way. He turned about shortly to see that the boys were not renewing operations, and found that the dog was following him at a short distance. The little fellow now crouched upon the ground and half crawled, half dragged himself toward Philip in that apparently abject spirit frequently shown by his human prototypes under oppression.

"You poor little tramp!" said Philip compassionately. "Do you want to come with me? Well, a good scrubbing and a square meal wouldn't hurt you, I guess. Come on, then." And as the dog, under his encouragement, came up to him, still in humble and suppliant attitude, Philip again reached down and patted him upon the head. The dog now trotted joyfully at his side until he arrived home. He demurred a little to the scrubbing and combing which Philip had the stable man give him, but as he was bountifully fed immediately afterwards he must have come to associate the scrubbing and combing with the feeding, for he was ever afterwards commendably patient under the former operation.

Philip concluded to keep him, as he had no dog at that time. Never was man better paid for kindness to a dog. Affectionate as dogs of his breed always are, Prince—for that was the name Philip gave him—had conceived an unusual measure of affection for his master. What pleasure unalloyed Philip had taken in his companionship in their glorious tramps into the country together! What delight had he taken in watching his life-lustful gambols as he ran hither and thither in sheer inconsequence of movement, nosing at mere nothings, dashing into the water of running brooks and chopping up a few mouthfuls of water, then up again and after the flitting butterfly or the low-perching bird, not with sinister motives of capture but for the pure joy of the chase, ever and anon running back to him for a kindly word or a friendly slap on the back!

And now they were to part! Let those imagine Philip's feelings who have owned and loved a dog, for they alone can.

Philip fell upon his knees and caught the faithful animal around the neck, a suppressed sob escaping him. A peculiar sound hard to describe came from Prince's throat as he pressed his nose close against his master's

face. He seemed to feel instinctively that something untoward was about to happen.

Philip arose, and giving the dog a last affectionate stroke, started to go. Prince gave a low, pitiful whine and took a hesitant step or two after him.

"No, Prince, you can't go with me. Edith is your mistress now. I've given you to her, for I know she will take good care of you for my sake."

Prince watched him go out of the gate and descend the hill, and kept his eyes riveted upon him as he passed down the street. When Philip turned the corner of the street he cast his eyes back to the house which was soon to be lost to his view. His look was answered by a sharp bark which was lengthened out into a mournful howl. It was Prince's good-bye, as fervent and sad as any that Philip had ever known.

As the train carried him southward that night, the full realization of his severance from familiar scenes and familiar faces and the thoughtful outlook upon an unknown and uncertain future, made sorrow heavy upon him. And that night, too, back at the home he had left, there was more than one restless pillow; and far into the night the

faithful Prince in long and mournful howls told out his grief over the loss of a loving master.

CHAPTER XIX

Philip is Remembered in his Father's Will

Philip had bought a ticket for St. Louis. From what has already appeared in this narrative it will not, perhaps, seem strange that his eyes should have been turned toward this city when he made up his mind to leave home, nor that the prospect of an indefinite stay in that city should have been pleasing enough to somewhat temper the sorrow he felt in leaving Ellerton. And if it be suspected in some quarters that this prospect afforded the controlling motive in Philip's renunciation—why, then, such a suspicion will not be discountenanced, lest faith in the veracity of this narrative be weakened in the minds of those who could never be brought to believe that any one ever acts from entirely disinterested and conscientious motives.

Without, therefore, inquiring closely into the psychology of Philip's actions, let it be repeated, simply, that he bought a ticket for St. Louis; and upon his arrival in that flourish-

ing metropolis he lost no time in establishing himself. Having made satisfactory living arrangements, he opened a steel and iron brokerage office in one of the centrally located office buildings in the city.

These things having been seen to, it may further be stated that he also lost no time in making his presence in the city known to at least one of his acquaintances there, who, indeed, appeared to be very glad to see him, and gave him the most unequivocal encouragement to call again.

Let us now leave Philip energetically and enthusiastically pushing his new business, and with equal enthusiasm availing himself of the social privileges above suggested, and return to Ellerton.

It is needless to say that Philip's sudden departure from home and the circumstances inducing to it, which soon became known, furnished appetizing food for Ellerton gossip. Opinion on the merits of the matter was pretty much to the effect that he had done an exceedingly foolish and quixotic thing. George Hartland was the most pronounced exponent of this view of the case. To him Philip's taking sides with the mill workmen in their controversy with the company over

the matter of wages was sufficiently absurd; but his resigning his position with the company and leaving home—this to young Hartland's mind capped the climax of absurdity and foolhardiness. He doubtless realized how helpless he himself would have been had he cut loose from his father's leading-strings and tried conclusions with the world on his own account. If he ever reflected that "home-keeping youth have ever homely wits," he knew, on the other hand, that they sometimes had full pocketbooks; and this was something that the home-leaving Valentines were never sure of. At all events, young Hartland would have been little disposed to sharpen his wits by taking any such chances.

But while criticism of Philip's course was generally adverse, there were a sober few in Ellerton who were of a different mind about it. These few had looked approvingly and admiringly upon his self-imposed work in the mills, appreciating how such a course made for a better understanding and more friendly relations between the company and its employees. They were ready now to honor his motives and applaud his conduct in the stand he had taken in behalf of the workmen, and looked upon his leaving the company as a

misfortune, foreboding ill to that concern by reason of the virtue that had gone out of it.

If Mr. Middleton, when he came out of his private office and found that Philip had left his desk, as stated, had any lingering hope or expectation that he would return to his work, that hope and expectation were effectually dispelled when he reached home in the evening and learned that his son had packed up his belongings and gone away—where, neither Mrs. Middleton nor Edith could tell him.

Smarting under the effect of Philip's rebellious attitude at the office, and now more so from his sudden and unfilial departure, Mr. Middleton had a short but pointed interview with his wife and daughter. What he said took the shape of commands. Since Philip had proved recreant to his duty as a son; had thrown off parental control and rebelled against parental authority, he must take the consequences of his acts. He had forfeited his privileges as a son, and must no longer be allowed to claim them. As he had gone, let him stay. In no event should they sue for his return. Thenceforth let him be to them as one dead—Mr. Middleton swallowed hard as he used this word—and as they

respected his authority and feared his displeasure, let them forbear to ever again mention his son's name in his presence.

Mr. Middleton had no need to insist upon severity of attitude so far as Mrs. Middleton was concerned. She even bettered his example in her expressions of disapproval of Philip's course. Secretly, she was not displeased at this alienation of her husband from his son. For it must mean the disinheritance of Philip and the consequent augmentation of her own and her daughter's portion.

Poor Edith, distracted by a divided love, made a futile effort to mollify her father, and then went to her own room and had another cry.

It was a dull dinner that evening at the Middleton's, and, on Mr. Middleton's part, a hurried breakfast the next morning. Edith did not appear at the breakfast table. She kept to her room, complaining of a headache. Mrs. Middleton's appetite and spirits were, however, quite normal, and by a not at all counterfeited display of cheerfulness she tried to infuse into her husband some of that spirit of resignation with the present state of affairs which rested so easily upon herself. Her

efforts availed little, however, against the depressing effect of the empty chair opposite him at the other end of the table.

When he reached the office that morning he held a conference with Mr. Cosgrove, as a result of which another man was in the course of the day installed in Philip's position as assistant secretary of the company. This was not at all to Mr. Cosgrove's liking; but the company's work must go on, and he received the most emphatic assurances from Mr. Middleton that Philip would not return to the company.

In the afternoon Mr. Middleton paid a visit to his lawyer, Mr. Willard, of the firm of Willard & Flitwood, the leading law firm in the city.

Mr. Willard was counsel for the steel company and also one of its directors. He had, in fact, incorporated the company, and, naturally, came in on the ground floor for a good block of its stock. The great appreciation of this stock (most of which he had disposed of, and at very good figures) as well as the steady increase of the law business of the firm, had brought Mr. Willard to that position of financial independence where he could select both his business and his clients.

He now eschewed all active litigation in the courts, allowing his partner to try most of the firm's cases, while he confined himself to the less arduous and much more congenial work of office consultation, briefing important cases for the appellate and supreme courts, and argument of important cases on appeal.

His partner, Mr. Flitwood, was a thin, wiry, aggressive man, well adapted to the rough-and-tumble of *nisi prius* work. There was, probably, a close connection between this division of the firm's work and the physical appearance and characteristics of the two men. Mr. Flitwood seemed to lose flesh in about the same proportion that Mr. Willard took it on. The former was quick, alert, scrutinizing, searching in manner; the latter quiet, suave and blandly insinuating. Mr. Flitwood always worked under pressure, and was given to worrying over his clients' cases; Mr. Willard slowly and leisurely, and if there was any worrying to be done over a case he let his clients do it. A bristling, militant mustache sat well upon Mr. Flitwood's upper lip. A pair of neatly trimmed, highly respectable side-whiskers adorned Mr. Willard's face, and were no inconsiderable aids to his dignified and portly bearing. His silk hat was im-

mensely becoming to Mr. Willard, but Mr. Flitwood must have apprehended the incongruity of such head-gear for himself, for he never wore one.

These men had one thing in common, however. Both were good lawyers, and the services of the firm were much in demand not only in the local but also in neighboring circuits.

Mr. Middleton was Mr. Willard's most important client, and he was not, therefore, kept waiting very long in the outer room after he had sent in his name to Mr. Willard.

"Ah! How do you do, Mr. Middleton," the lawyer said blandly, as he arose and extended his hand. "Things must be moving smoothly with you these days, for you are quite a stranger at my office."

"That would seem to be a warranted inference," replied Mr. Middleton, "for the fact that things are not moving very smoothly just now occasions my present visit to you. Mr. Willard, you probably remember this document," drawing a paper from his pocket and handing it to him.

Mr. Willard reseated himself at his desk, adjusted his eye-glasses and unfolded the paper.

"Oh, yes, certainly—your will, Mr. Middleton; the one I drew for you about three years ago. And you want, I presume, to make some little changes in it?"

"A very decided change, Mr. Willard. I want all mention of my son stricken out of it, and what I left to him to be equally divided between my wife and daughter."

Mr. Willard let the will fall upon his desk, took off his eye-glasses and looked at Mr. Middleton with as much astonishment in his face as he ever allowed to be depicted upon his habitually composed countenance.

"This surprises you, no doubt, Mr. Willard, but it is what I want done; and you will oblige me by making this change. I need only say to you that my son, by his recent conduct, has forfeited all claim to my bounty. He has just resigned his position with the company and thus thwarted my plans and purposes for his future; and this after lending aid and encouragement to the mill workmen in their rebellion against a necessary wage reduction. And yesterday he left home without a word as to where he was going."

Mr. Willard may have suspected that there was another side to this story, but he gave no hint of this; nor did he attempt to dissuade

Mr. Middleton from his purpose. According to his conception of a lawyer's business, it was not for him to assume the position of a moral censor over his clients, but only to make effectual their intentions and desires by hedging them about with the necessary legal formalities.

Quickly recovering from the very natural surprise at such a strange and unusual proceeding, he again adjusted his eye-glasses and took up the will. After hastily running it over he put it down, again took off his eye-glasses, and after rubbing them a moment meditatively he said placidly:

"Very well, Mr. Middleton. The change you wish made, however, is of so radical a character that it would be best accomplished, I think, by your making an entirely new will rather than by way of a supplementary codicil."

"That, of course, must be as you think best," said Mr. Middleton.

"Your purpose, then, is, I take it, to entirely disinherit your son?" Mr. Willard continued in the same placid tone.

"Yes, that is my purpose," said Mr. Middleton, without, however, any great relish for this bald expression of it.

"Then, of course," Mr. Willard went on, "you want your will in such shape as to preclude any contest over it, or, at all events, to safeguard against its being broken."

"Of course," assented Mr. Middleton. "I don't want a single loophole left for lawyers' wits to make a driveway of."

"Just so," said Mr. Willard. "But you will recollect, Mr. Middleton, that you said you wanted all mention of your son stricken out of the will. Now, not to mention his name at all would be to leave just such a loophole as you wish to guard against. The law, I need hardly tell you, is exceedingly jealous of the rights of a testator's close kin, especially his children, and indulges every presumption in their favor. One such presumption—according to a long line of cases—is that where a child is not mentioned in a will the testator has simply forgotten him; such a presumption being deemed less violent than that he should have intended to deny such child a share in his bounty. As to such child the testator will be held to have died intestate, and the child would be entitled to a child's portion, as in cases of intestacy, and to a right of contribution against the devisees and legatees under the will to make up such

share. Now—"

"Oh, well, you know how to get around that, I suppose," Mr. Middleton broke in impatiently. Mr. Willard's legal dissertation was strangely uninteresting to him.

"I was about to say," continued Mr. Willard blandly, not in the least disconcerted by the interruption, "that in a case of this kind it is wise for the testator to make to the person he desires to disinherit some small bequest—a dollar, for example—which quite as effectually accomplishes his purpose, and at the same time rebuts the legal presumption that he has forgotten one who would naturally be a beneficiary under his will, but for whom he has failed to make provision."

"Well, fix it that way, then, Mr. Willard," said Mr. Middleton, rising, apparently in a hurry to get away. "When shall I call and execute the will?"

"I guess I can have it ready for you to-morrow afternoon. But before you go, Mr. Middleton, we'd better run this over together and fix upon just how your new will is to read. You may, besides, want to make some other changes that will suggest themselves as we go along."

Mr. Willard here took up the will and

adjusted his eye-glasses, while Mr. Middleton reluctantly reseated himself.

For some reason Mr. Middleton appeared anxious to bring the interview to a close. Perhaps his feeling of anger and resentment toward his son, which had little of malevolence or vindictiveness in it, was suffering some abatement under this slow and methodical process of putting the evidence of it in black and white. For anger and resentment seek an explosive utterance, not a slow and methodical one. Perhaps, too, he was becoming more conscious of the seriousness of the thing he was doing and less confident of his justification in doing it.

At all events he hurried Mr. Willard as much as he could, which was very little, indeed, for Mr. Willard was not in the habit of hurrying or turning out any hasty piece of legal work.

In due time, however, the old will had been gone over, and Mr. Willard had made the necessary memoranda for his guidance in drawing up the new one. Mr. Middleton then hastily left the office.

The next day, in the afternoon, he called again, pursuant to appointment, and found the new will duly prepared for his signature.

He formally executed it in presence of the requisite witnesses, who in due form subscribed their names thereto.

The will contained the usual revocatory clause: "I hereby revoke all former wills and codicils by me made."

The only reference to his son was in the following paragraph:

"I give and bequeath to my son, Philip Middleton, the sum of one dollar."

And this was how Philip was remembered in his father's will.

CHAPTER XX

The Committee of Three

It will be seen that Mr. Middleton acted quite after the approved manner of irate fathers. Disinheritance has always been deemed the most condign punishment that could be meted out to rebellious sons.

And, where the disposing parent happens to be a man of wealth, the punishment would seem to be somewhat severe. To put two or three hundred thousand dollars into one of the scales of fortune's balance and nothing into the other, should certainly make that balance drop heavily on the money-weighted side. True, it is a debatable question whether one is really benefited by coming into possession of money that he has not earned. But in a state of society where money is the ruling standard, that question is destined to remain a purely academic one. At all events, satisfactory evidence is wanting of any one in these days having renounced his patrimony on the ground that it would not be good for him to have it.

In Mr. Middleton's punitive proceeding, however, one essential was lacking. Philip knew nothing about it. Mr. Middleton was incapable of that calm detachment from personal feeling which would have enabled him, having set the mills of justice grinding, to abide unconcernedly the turning out of the grist. He wanted to make Philip smart for it, but would have much preferred to have the smarting begin at once. To defer it until the reading of his will by his executor was to postpone a punishment that Mr. Middleton felt like imposing immediately, and also to deprive himself of that solace to his outraged feelings which he would have had could he at once have brought home to his son the knowledge of what he had done.

As he could not do this, he did the next best—or worst—thing. He told his wife about it. Her remarkable composure, however, not to say complacency, under the intelligence almost angered him.

He did not destroy the old will.

"It is not necessary to destroy it," Mr. Willard had said to him, "as it is annulled by the new will, and should you at any time want to republish the old one, it will be convenient to have it ready to your hand."

Mr. Middleton may have contemplated a possible reconciliation with his son, for he placed the two wills together in a drawer of the secretary in his study, a small room opening on his sleeping-room.

This room was not simply a "study" by courtesy, for Mr. Middleton did occasionally do some studying there. Not, perhaps, after the manner of those addicted to the studious habit; but still in a way to make an appreciable draft upon the gray matter of his brain. If he did not bury himself in any deep calculation of eclipses or kindred scientific problems, he did, at times, apply himself assiduously to the equally absorbing and, to many, fully as difficult problem, how to make one dollar produce two. And those who have bent their mental energies upon this engrossing problem will vouch for the mental wear and tear of it, and, when a happy solution has crowned their efforts, for as fine a thrill as he experiences who has succeeded in solving any of the abstruse problems of the schools.

But Mr. Middleton was destined soon to be busy with the reverse problem, how to keep two dollars from becoming one. Trouble was brewing at the mills. It soon became

generally known among the workmen that Philip's mediation had been unsuccessful, and the adjourned meeting of the union, which was to have received and acted upon his report, was a stormy one.

Philip's letter was read to the union; and if a doubt lurked in the minds of any of the workmen as to his good-will toward them, it must have been dispelled by the contents of this letter. Loud cheering ensued upon the reading of it, and all who spoke gave Philip the most unstinted praise for his fidelity to the union and his consideration for the welfare of the men, as evidenced by his generous gift. Even Aaron Gilks, who was so continually condemning things that he had almost forgotten how to praise anything or anybody, now found a fitting word or two in commendation of Philip's conduct.

But in the proportion that Philip was praised the company was blamed, and the demand for an immediate strike became general.

John Waters, however, upon whom Philip's mantle seemed to have fallen, made an earnest plea against hasty action, and besought the members of the union that as they honored Philip and were grateful for what he had

done for them, they should show their respect and gratitude by giving heed to his counsel. As he had counselled patience and moderation, could they do less than to defer to his wishes by exercising those virtues?

Waters had acquired a commanding influence in the union, having become the leader of the conservative Right in its meetings, as Aaron Gilks was of the radical Left.

His suggestion now that a committee of three be appointed to confer with the company and seek an adjustment of differences, was adopted; but the temper of the union was seen in that Aaron Gilks was made chairman of this committee. Waters and the business agent, Isaac H. Battles, were made the other members of the committee.

This committee was directed to confer with the company at once and to report to the union on the next night; and it was voted that nightly meetings of the union should be held until some final action in the matter was taken.

The next morning the committee called upon Mr. Middleton.

"The company has no treaty to make with the union, whatever," he said, when they made known the object of their visit.

"Whatever negotiations we enter into will be with the men direct. If any of them have any grievances let them come and present them themselves."

"They all have one grievance just now," said Gilks, "and you know very well what that is, Mr. Middleton."

"Oh, I have no doubt the men were unwilling enough to have their wages reduced," said Mr. Middleton; "but I don't know that they would rather stop work than submit to the new scale. And if they do take that position the union and its firebrand agitators are responsible for it."

"When you speak of agitators, Mr. Middleton," said Gilks with a leer, "I don't suppose you have reference to your own son."

Mr. Middleton changed color.

"I have no apologies to make for my son's conduct," he said with some heat, "and the penalty for it will fall on him in due season, and make him rue the day that he went into the mill."

"We are making very poor headway," thought Waters.

"Mr. Middleton," he said in a conciliatory tone, "in every dispute there's usually some right on both sides, and I think the men will

stand for some cut in their wages if the company meets them half way and shows that it wants to be fair with them. Now can't we have this thing arbitrated? Let the company choose one man, the union another, and these two a third, and let them go into the thing and make a report on what they consider a fair and just scale of wages under the circumstances. The men, I think, would be willing to submit the case to men selected in this way, and abide by their decision."

"There is nothing to arbitrate," said Mr. Middleton coldly. "Where an employer offers a certain price for certain work, the man to whom the offer is made is not obliged to do the work for the offered pay unless he so chooses. It isn't a question for arbitration at all, and the employer is under no legal or moral obligation to arbitrate it."

"That's true, maybe," returned Waters. "The employer may be under no obligation to arbitrate the matter, but isn't he under a moral obligation to offer and pay to the workmen what the work is justly worth?"

"He is under no sort of obligation to pay any more than he chooses to pay," said Mr. Middleton shortly. "The matter rests entirely with him."

Then turning upon Waters somewhat sharply he said:

"It seems to me, Waters, that you are the last man that should come to the company with complaints. You've had things pretty easy for over two years, and the company hasn't interfered. You ought to be supporting the company now instead of opposing it."

"It isn't for myself that I'm here, Mr. Middleton," said Waters, "but for the men and the union. I want to see this wages question settled without having any trouble over it. I'm trying to act just as I think your son would act if he was here. And don't think, Mr. Middleton," he went on with feeling, "that I'm not thankful for what I've had at the hands of one that's been close to the company. I don't ever expect to be able to pay that debt, sir; but there isn't a night of my life that I don't pray God to bless your son and keep him, wherever he may be!"

The tears stood in Waters's eyes, and the last words were in a voice that trembled almost to breaking.

Mr. Middleton flushed slightly, took up some papers from his desk and made a pretence of examining them.

Had Waters come as a committee of one from the union he might have been able to embrace the present auspicious moment to some advantage. But there were Gilks and Battles. The latter, who up to this time had said little, fearing now, perhaps, lest his importance as a member of the committee should be overlooked, here blurted out:

"You'll have to make some sort of terms with us, Mr. Middleton, or there'll be a strike, sure's you live, and that'll mean a shut-down of the mills."

Mr. Middleton's face hardened.

"A strike, possibly—but why a shut-down, Mr. Battles?"

"Why?" said Battles with a short, vapid laugh. "Well, you don't suppose—you don't think you could run the mills with a lot of imported 'scabs,' do you?"

Mr. Middleton saw the veiled threat. There was an angry gleam in his eye and his face set to a cold, hard and determined expression.

"We propose to run the mills—strike or no strike," he said, doubling his fist upon his desk, "and if any of you fellows try to stop us by interfering with the men who want to work, it'll be the worse for you, that's all."

Waters raised his hand deprecatingly.

"The union won't stand for any violence, Mr. Middleton—not if I can help it," he said, eyeing Battles askance; "but wouldn't it be better for the company to keep the old men at a little higher wages than to put in a lot of new men at less pay?"

"Oh, I guess all the old men are not going to leave us," said Mr. Middleton. "There'll be enough of them stay to take care of the new men that we may need."

"Oh, if you're lookin' for traitors, Mr. Middleton," interjected Gilks, "you may find a few if you make the price right."

"We sha'n't have to look for—traitors, as you call them. There'll be plenty of the men that'll feel that they owe a higher duty to their families than they do to the union."

"You don't think, then," returned Gilks sarcastically, "that the men are doing their duty to their families when they protest and stand out against a reduction of wages which takes from their families the necessities and comforts to which they are rightly entitled?"

"I won't argue this matter with you," said Mr. Middleton testily. "Let me repeat what I said to you at first. The company has no treaty or terms of any kind to make

with the union. This is final. Gentlemen, I wish you good morning."

Mr. Middleton here arose and waved them significantly to the door.

"You wish us to report to the union, then, that you will not recognize it at all?" said Gilks as he rose to go.

"Report what you like," said Mr. Middleton carelessly. "That is the position, however, that the company takes in the matter."

"Well, if you hear something drop," said Battles as he followed Gilks to the door, "you can't say we didn't warn you in time."

Mr. Middleton's lip curled contemptuously, but he deigned no reply.

His eye, however, fell not unkindly upon Waters, who was the last to leave the room.

Then an idea seemed to occur to him. Going to the door he called Waters back.

"You needn't wait," he said to Gilks and Battles. "I want to see Waters about another matter."

Waters re-entered the room and Mr. Middleton closed the door.

As Gilks and Battles passed out of the office building, the latter looked up at the former curiously.

"What's up now, I wonder? What do

you suppose he wants to talk to Waters about?"

"I dunno," said Gilks, "unless he thinks he can work him easier than he can us. Waters is altogether too easy. He began to talk of arbitration right away. When you do that you show the other fellow that you hold a weak hand."

"Yes," assented Battles, "he made a break there; and he seemed to be awfully afraid, too, that we might handle those 'scabs' rather roughly if there was a strike and they tried to run the mills with 'em."

"The union may not *stand* for any violence," said Gilks with significant emphasis, "but the men won't consider those 'scabs' their friends, I can tell you."

"No, they won't be likely to invite them to dinner," said Battles, with his vapid, staccato cackle.

"That they won't," said Gilks, smiling grimly.

"Well," said Battles as they were about to separate, "we'll see to-night if Mr. Middleton has used any soft soap on Waters."

"Yes, we'll see," returned Gilks, with a threatening nod of the head. "Shouldn't wonder much, though, if he did. That's

what's generally used to soften water, you know"; and Gilks grinned.

"That's so," said Battles, cackling his appreciation of the word-play as he walked away.

The "soft soap" that Mr. Middleton applied, and how far it went with Waters, will appear in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXI

Which Concerns Itself Wholly with the Matter of "Soap," and Shows why Mr. Middleton must have Lost Faith in the Efficacy of that Exceedingly Useful Article

Motioning Waters to a seat, Mr. Middleton sat down at his desk. He disguised a few moments' meditation by an apparent perusal of some papers. Then turning around slowly and facing Waters, he said:

"Waters, you don't appear to be quite so much of a hothead as some of your friends in the union are, and this makes it easier to talk to you."

As if to corroborate this statement by ease of attitude, Mr. Middleton crossed his legs, shoved his hands into his pockets and gave his chair a tilt backwards.

"Now, Waters," he continued, assuming a friendly tone, "the union is no place for a man like you. It only places you at a disadvantage, for it holds you back, where, if

you were not tied to it, your qualifications would serve to put you forward. Take my advice—get out of it. It will be greatly to your interest to do so."

"How to my interest?" asked Waters, somewhat mystified.

"Well, I'll tell you," said Mr. Middleton; and here he leaned forward and assumed a confidential tone:

"If the union fights us in this present matter—and it looks as if it were going to—we propose to stand pat and fight it to a finish. It'll mean the end of the union. We sha'n't have any trouble in getting men, for the country is full of men looking for work just now, and good men, too. We'll make it a condition of their employment that they are not to become members of any workers' union, and in this way we'll put a check upon all further unionism in the mills. We'll make it a non-union mill, and keep it so.

"Now, Waters," Mr. Middleton continued, "if you stay in the union, of course you will have to go down with it, that's all. But here is the proposition I want to make to you. You've been with us for a long time. You understand the mill business thoroughly. You're not, as I said before, a hothead like

many of the union men; and for these reasons we'd like to keep you with us. For obvious reasons, too, we should like to have as many as possible of the old men remain with us; and here, Waters, is where you can be of considerable assistance to us. Judging by your appointment on this committee from the union, I should say that you are a man that would have considerable influence with the workmen. Now, in case the union orders a strike, if you'll get out of the union and get as many of the men as you can to go with you, the company will find some responsible position for you under the new order of things that'll make it worth your while to break with the union and stand by the company."

A flush of mingled shame and anger came into Waters's honest face.

"If this is all you wanted to see me about, Mr. Middleton," he said, rising from his chair, "I'm sorry you called me back. I'm not the man you're looking for. I came here this morning to do what I could for the men, and not to feather my own nest at their expense. What 'ud they think of me—what 'ud you think of me, sir, if, coming here to speak for the men, I sold 'em out for

the thirty pieces of silver you're offering me for doing it?"

Mr. Middleton was taken aback. His face flushed angrily.

"I'm not asking you to sell the men out," he said hotly. "What I'm asking you to do is for their good as well as for your own. Won't the men be better off to keep at work during these dull times than to stay out on a strike doing nothing? And as for yourself, you don't owe anything to the union, and you're not obliged to stay with it if it is against your interest to do so."

"It might be better for the men to stay at work than to go out on a strike just now," said Waters. "I'm not saying it wouldn't be. But what you're asking me to do is to help you break up the union; to make it a non-union mill. Maybe I don't owe anything to the union, but I do owe something to the men. We owe it to each other to stand together; and we can't do that better than through the union. There may be, as you say, a few hotheads in the union that maybe don't do us much good sometimes, but that's no reason why the sober men should leave it—it's a stronger reason why they should stay in it."

"And let the hotheads drag them down with themselves and the union," said Mr. Middleton sarcastically.

"To keep 'em from doing it, if possible," said Waters.

"Well," said Mr. Middleton abruptly, "if there's a strike, the union will have to go, that's all; and you'll go with it. You've appeared to be a sensible man, and I wanted to give you a chance to save yourself. Since you don't appear to be willing to take it, I have nothing further to say, except that the time may come when you'll be sorry you didn't do it."

"No, I sha'n't be sorry on that account, Mr. Middleton," said Waters, turning his cap nervously in his fingers; "but what I shall be sorry for is that I couldn't do anything to patch up this trouble between us. I don't want to see any fight over it, for I know a fight will be a bad thing for the men. And it'll be a bad thing for the company, too. It isn't for me, maybe, to advise you, Mr. Middleton, but it seems to me you'd serve your own interests better by settling this trouble with the men than by fighting it out with them."

"I think we've discussed that matter suf-

ficiently already," said Mr. Middleton coldly, "and I don't care to discuss it any further. If you have any advice to offer go and give it to the men—the company doesn't need it."

"Well," said Waters as he turned to the door, "I'm not saying the men don't need some advice, but from the looks of things a little wouldn't hurt the company, either."

"Fool!" muttered Mr. Middleton when Waters had gone. "He doesn't know which side his bread is buttered on, that's evident—throwing up a good thing because he thinks he's got to stand by the union. Huh! Most of 'em would knife him quick enough if they could make anything by it; and there wouldn't be any high talk about selling out or taking thirty pieces of silver, either. Huh!" And Mr. Middleton's lip curled contemptuously.

Many among the well-to-do, priding themselves upon a social status largely fixed by artificial standards, are much given to arrogating virtues superior to those of the poorer classes, and who think as Mr. Middleton thought, that the lower down you go in the social scale the easier it is to buy men—and, Heaven help us! women, too—and the cheaper they will sell themselves. And it is

a matter for surprise to these people when they find that in simple lives many of the simple virtues have an exceedingly sturdy growth. A kind fate which denies to the lowly so many of the refinements of life will often recompense this denial by a gift of character and soul, making them not unlike many a flower, which, though rooted in the meanest soil, blossoms in beauty and throws out upon the air a sweet and grateful fragrance.

CHAPTER XXII

The Formal Notice

Aaron Gilks, as chairman of the conference committee, made his report to the union that night, advising the members of the complete failure of the conference and of the hopelessness of accomplishing anything with the company in the way of a settlement of differences. He followed his report with a motion for an immediate declaration of a strike by the union.

This motion was promptly seconded, and the question, to strike or not to strike, was now squarely before the union.

Upon this question Waters was one of the first to speak, as he was anxious to forestall any hasty action, and to secure a full and careful deliberation on the part of the union before it should make a final and irrevocable decision.

A great responsibility now rested upon the union, he said. Upon its decision this night hung the welfare of the men for months, perhaps for years to come. They should not

blind themselves to the plain facts of the case, but should look them squarely in the face. A strike was a serious thing. If a strike should be declared the company would make a determined fight. It would mean a long season of idleness and consequent privation for themselves and their families; and should the strike fail in the end, it would mean for many of them permanent loss of employment in the mills.

The very life of the union, too, was at stake. If there was a strike, and the company succeeded in breaking it, its purpose was to break the union also, and to make and keep the mill a non-union mill.

In face of such possible consequences a strike should not be declared unless they had the strongest assurances of success.

Had they any such assurance? Were not the chances of success against them at the present time?

He called attention to the general business depression throughout the country. To the many mills and factories that had been compelled to close. To the multitude of men out of employment ready and eager to step into their places if they should walk out.

He had no apologies to make for the com-

pany, and would yield to no one in condemning the course it was pursuing toward the men. If he thought a strike would avail to bring it to fair terms he would be the first to vote for it. But under present conditions a strike could not succeed; it would be foredoomed to failure. With so many men coming to the mills every day looking for work, this was no time to try to enforce their claims, however just. An attempt to do so could only end in disaster.

What, then, did he counsel? To wait; to be patient; to take the half loaf until such time as they could demand the whole loaf with some assurance of getting it. The present business depression could not last forever. Brighter days would come, and perhaps right soon. Then they could demand and, if need be, fight for their rights with some likelihood of their getting them.

Waters's speech might have been more effective had not Aaron Gilks risen to reply to it. The latter had made special preparation for this meeting, for he knew it would be the crucial one upon the matter in hand; and he now opened to the full all his vials of wrath and denunciation.

He denounced the policy of delay which

was frittering away time that was precious. A strike should have been declared immediately upon the cutting of the scale by the company. What had been accomplished by waiting upon young Middleton's mediation? Nothing! What through the appointment and efforts of the conference committee? Nothing! And what would be accomplished by waiting for a more convenient season? Nothing, except to let the iron cool that was now at white heat for the hammer!

Such dilly-dallying and delay only weakened the union and fortified the company in its arrogant position. Could the union appear formidable to the company when they hesitated in defiantly demanding their rights, and came to it with soft words and conciliatory overtures of compromise and settlement? Every day's delay was costly to the union and helpful to the company. It was true, as Waters had said: men were besieging the company for work every day. Was not the town filling up with men brought in on every train who either heard of a contemplated strike or were solicited to come by emissaries of the company so that it might be prepared to man the mills in case there should be a walk-out by the present force? Had a strike

been at once declared it would not have been possible for the company to do this, and it would have been compelled to concede their demands in a very short time.

But let the outside men come. Let this not deter them from striking. Let the union show its strength by declaring a strike in face of it. Let the foreign "scabs" come if they chose, but let them try to fill the places of union men at their peril! Mr. Waters had seen fit to assure Mr. Middleton in the conference that there would be no violence if there was a strike and the company attempted to install new men. Let Waters speak for himself, and not for those who had not such good reason to favor the company as he had. From Mr. Waters's present course he thought he was justified in asking him if there was not some connection between his present aversion to a strike and the private conference that he had had with Mr. Middleton after the committee's conference with Mr. Middleton was ended. (This statement created a sensation, and many eyes in the hall were turned toward Waters into whose face there came an angry flush.)

No violence! Should they, then, stand and deliver when a highwayman accosted them if

they could protect themselves? The company was robbing them! Should they tamely submit? The men who took their places in the mills would be robbing them! Should they allow it? They would be wise enough to commit no overt acts, but would find means of persuasion that would be effectual with the base hirelings of the company who sought to feed upon the misfortunes of honest men. To whom, pray, did the mills belong? Did not the men who for years had manned them and brought them to their present high state of efficiency have some vested right in them as well as the company, a right that should be respected as well as that of a shareholder who drew his dividends on the stock that the workmen had made valuable?

And now they were asked to wait content with a half loaf until they could safely demand the whole. Yes, wait and see the company, grown more greedy and insolent in its fancied security, instead of restoring the whole loaf, reducing the half to a quarter!

Out upon such a policy! There should be no further paltering or delay; no further waiting for justice that would never come by waiting nor by humble and submissive appeal. Forbearance had ceased to be a

virtue. Were they, forsooth, smitten upon one cheek, to turn abjectly and receive a still harder blow upon the other? (Gilks here laughed sardonically.) The masters of money had wrested to their own baleful uses the beneficent teachings of the New Testament, and while with iron heel they were pressing down upon the necks of their prostrate weaker brothers, they were commending to them the Christian graces of humility, submission and of non-resistance! Not to such lengths or ends, certainly, did the great Teacher of men direct His precepts; but were He here to-day He would scourge from the marts of trade and industry the heartless, grasping, soulless buccaneers as He had scourged the greedy money-changers from the Temple!

Haranguing the union in this strain for a half-hour or longer, Gilks succeeded in working the members of the union as well as himself up to a high pitch of excitement. The effect of his philippic was evidenced by the loud and prolonged applause which greeted its conclusion and by the cries of "strike!" "strike!" and "question!" "question!" that came up from all parts of the hall.

The president rose and rapped sharply

upon the table with his gavel.

"Does any other member wish to speak on the question," he said. "If not, the chair will put the question."

Again came the cry of "question!" "question!" from a hundred throats.

Amid intense excitement the question, "Shall a strike be declared," was put.

A thunderous "aye" came up, that made the call of the negative a mere formality.

"The ayes appear to have it," said the president; and then added: "The ayes have it."

Cheer after cheer went up to attest the satisfaction with which the vote was received.

Waters now rose; but amid the din and confusion it was with difficulty that he could make himself heard to get the recognition of the chair. When quiet was restored by repeated raps of the president's gavel, Waters was given the floor.

He arose, he said, simply to say a few words on a question of privilege. Mr. Gilks had made an insinuation reflecting upon himself that he could not overlook, and that the members of the union could hardly expect him to overlook. Mr. Gilks had spoken of a private conference that he (Waters) had had

with Mr. Middleton. He admitted that he did have such a conference. It was not, however, of his own seeking, and what had been said at this conference was of such a nature—almost wholly personal to himself—that he had not intended to say anything about it to the union or to any one. But what had been hinted by Mr. Gilks now compelled him to take the union into his confidence touching what had passed between himself and Mr. Middleton at this conference.

Waters then gave a brief account of what had taken place.

What he had said to Mr. Middleton he was ready to say and would now say to the members of the union: that he was a union man and would stand by the union, strike or no strike. His place was with the union, and he would stand or fall with it. If he had opposed a strike it was because he believed a strike at the present time would work disaster to the men and to the union. But he was ready to submit to the will of the union, and as it had now decided upon a strike he would do all in his power to make that strike a success. Let them judge of his fealty to the union by his acts, and not otherwise. Let them test it by looking to see whether, in case of a strike,

he lifted a tong or put a bar to the rolls until he had the sanction of the union for doing it. (Cheers!)

He had only one last suggestion to make now, and that was that a definite time should be fixed at which the workmen should be called out, and that the company should be notified of this, for perhaps at the eleventh hour it might concede the union's demands. He thought it advisable that an executive committee be given charge of the matter, to notify the company, to receive any communications that it had to make, and at the time decided upon to call the strike on behalf of the union in case the company had not made or was not disposed to make any settlement at that time.

Finally, he cautioned and counselled the men against any acts of violence after they walked out. Such acts could only bring against them and against the union the weight of that public sentiment to which they should look for their strongest support in the battle for their just rights.

There was renewed cheering when Waters sat down.

Gilks at once arose to say that Waters's explanation of his conference with Mr. Mid-

dleton was entirely satisfactory, and that if he (Gilks) had been led in the heat of debate to say anything reflecting upon Mr. Waters's honor as a member of the union he was ready to retract it.

At this *amende honorable* there was more cheering.

Gilks expressed himself as favorable to Waters's suggestion of an executive committee, but that if any notice was to be sent to the company it should be a very short one. So far as he was concerned he would like to see the notice to the men posted the next morning. Delays were now dangerous, for while they were delaying the company was fortifying itself for the fight.

Waters's suggestion was adopted, and, on motion, the conference committee was continued to act as the strike executive committee.

A formal notice was drawn up and signed by Gilks, Waters and Battles, as members of the executive committee and on behalf of the union.

This gave notice to the company that unless settlement or offer of settlement of the wage dispute between the union and the company was made by the company with the undersigned executive committee by twelve o'clock

noon of the second day following, fires would be drawn in the mills and the men would walk out.

This notice Mr. Middleton received the next morning. He read it, crammed it into his pocket, hastily left the office and took a car for town to have a conference with Mr. Hartland.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Strong Arm of the Law

Mr. Middleton's interview with Mr. Hartland was short. They both had a much longer one with the company's attorney, Mr. Willard, to whose office they made haste to repair.

As a result of this interview there was a hurried preparation of affidavits in Mr. Willard's office, and a less hurried and more careful drawing up of a bill in equity for an injunction.

Signatures to the affidavits having been obtained in the course of the day, they were attached to the bill, and with the bill and affidavits Mr. Willard, late in the afternoon, appeared before Judge Baldwin of the circuit court in his chambers at the court-house.

The next morning, well before twelve o'clock, the time set for the strike, a restraining order from the court was duly served upon all the officers of the workmen's union and upon Gilks, Battles and Waters, as members of the strike committee.

This restraining order strictly commanded the defendants, until the further order of the court, absolutely to desist and refrain from in any way or manner ordering, coercing, persuading, inducing or otherwise causing, directly or indirectly, the employees of the Ellerton Iron & Steel Works to strike or quit the service of said company.

"I guess this blocks us," said Battles, when he, Waters and Gilks came together for a conference.

"This is an outrage!" Gilks exclaimed angrily. "What right have they to keep us at work when we want to quit? They can't stop us from striking. Let's pay no attention to the order."

"I think we'd better go and see Langdon before we do anything further in the matter," said Waters. "He can explain this thing to us and tell us what we ought to do."

"I guess that's what we'd better do," said Battles.

Gilks grumblingly assenting, the three boarded a car for town, where arriving, they wended their way up the east side of the court-house square until they came to where a gilt-lettered sign hung out from a doorway. The sign bore the inscription:

Elisha Langdon,
Attorney and Counsellor at Law.

Entering the open doorway and ascending the stairs to the second-floor landing, they turned to the right and walked a few steps through the hallway to a door upon which was tacked a tin sign, bearing a like inscription with the one below.

Waters knocked at the door.

A cheery and high-pitched "Come in!" came from the room.

The men entered. Mr. Langdon was alone, and was seated, engrossed in a law book, at his desk in the further corner of the room, near one of the windows which looked out upon the street. He was seated, that is, if the comfortable and quite lawyer-like posture he had assumed could be called being seated. His chair was back-tilted and his long legs were stretched out and up to find lodgment for his feet upon his desk. His feet were incased in a pair of low-cut cowhide shoes which gave ample display to light-colored cotton hose that seemed to lack the restraining support of garters. A long black coat, a trifle rusty, hung somewhat loosely over his lank frame. The coat was unbuttoned, as was also the upper part of his waistcoat,

revealing a considerable expanse of shirt bosom that might hardly have been called immaculate. A black string necktie was somewhat inartistically knotted under a turned-point standing collar.

The unfavorable impression of Mr. Langdon which his apparel might well have created would, however, have been minimized, if not entirely removed, by a look into his face. It was not a handsome face by any means, if judged by ordinary standards. It was homely to a degree. And yet it was a good face to look into. A native honesty and sincerity seemed to be stamped upon his features, giving him that frank, open countenance which invites confidence and inspires trust. There was, too, an engaging play of humor in the dark eyes that looked out from their cavernous depths.

Without applying to Langdon the hackneyed metaphor of a diamond in the rough, he was a man in whom the fundamentals of sturdy character had deep and abiding root, but who would have profited considerably by a course of social grooming. He had, indeed, been so absorbed in the great essentials that he had neglected the fine amenities and conventions of social life, the value and

importance of which are, perhaps, underestimated because their best exemplars have often, unfortunately, so little else to recommend them.

If Mr. Langdon thus lacked the fine proportions of a symmetrical personality, it may have been due to the fact that he was a self-made man; and self-made men are not always well-made men. Born to poverty to begin with, he was early thrust into a strenuous struggle for existence, and later in life thrust himself into a still more strenuous struggle for an education. At an age when most young men are leaving school he presented himself for matriculation at one of those starveling seats of learning in the Middle West which are dignified by the name of college. At that interesting period of his life Langdon was blessed with this world's goods to the extent of the suit of clothes on his back, and the fifty dollars in his pocket which he had carefully saved up for this educational venture. He was neither afraid nor ashamed of work, however; and having invested in a sawbuck, wood-saw and ax he devoted the time he could spare from his studies to conserving his modest hoard by wood sawing and splitting for the townspeople whom he

found in need of such service. With buck, saw and ax thrown over his shoulder, he would frequently be seen of an afternoon making his rounds of the town without an objective point, not unlike the itinerant knife and scissors-grinder, hopeful of and not infrequently successful in finding a job of work before nightfall.

And if one of the facetious students did dub him "Old Sawbucks,"—an appellation which soon became current—this troubled him very little, nor at all lessened his seeming ambition to live up to the requirements of that homely sobriquet, for no one could have excelled him in the expedition with which he could reduce a cord of wood to kitchen-range pieces.

The long summer vacations were, however, both literally and figuratively, his times of harvest. Wheat fields were nodding for the reaper and binder, and harvest hands were in urgent demand at good wages. Langdon threw himself into the harvest fields with the same ardor he had applied to his wood sawing. He never suffered the reaper to catch him at his station with unbound sheaves, and on the hottest of the hot days he stuck to his post when many older and more seasoned hands

had been forced from the field.

Harvest season over, Langdon usually spent what remained of the long vacation in selling books by subscription. Most of these books, it is needless to say, were of a kind to need energetic pushing by agents to bring them into anything like general circulation, albeit they all had the unqualified indorsement of their publishers as books that ought to be found in the library of every home. Be this last as it may, Langdon was certainly instrumental in placing them in the libraries of many homes, much to his own and the publishers' emolument, if not greatly to the edification of his subscribers.

And so with the savings from his summer work and the steady, if small, income from his wood sawing and other work during the school year, and the rigid economy of his living—most of the time either boarding himself or content with the equally frugal fare of students' boarding clubs—Langdon was enabled to finish the college course free from debt, and was graduated, not with the highest honors to be sure, but with the creditable "cum laude" which attested his worthiness, and which, judging by the good account many have given of themselves who have

received that modest encomium upon graduation, should by no means be considered a mark of mediocrity.

Continuing to apply himself with persistence and assiduity to work of one kind and another, and practicing the same rigid economies, Langdon prosecuted his law studies and in due time was admitted to the bar, and came to Ellerton to practice his profession. For three years now his sign had hung out upon the street, making its modest appeal for clients. This appeal had not yet been answered to any very marked extent. A young lawyer's road to a paying clientage is, in the absence of influential backing and exceptional circumstances, an exceedingly rough and thorny one. Many who take it faint and fall by the wayside; and many, too, who finally reach the hilltops must contemplate manifold bruises and lacerations from the perilous ascent, the marks of many of which remain ineffaceable.

Langdon's previous bouts with adverse circumstances had, however, inured him to the hardships of a legal novitiate, and he had plodded on in spite of frequent discouragements, buoyed up by the occasional clearings that appeared in the seemingly

impenetrable way. The narrow and tortuous path was widening a little for him now. During the past year he had prosecuted to satisfactory settlement a couple of damage suits growing out of personal injuries sustained by workmen in the mills; and the skill with which he had conducted these suits as well as the exceedingly modest honorarium he had retained for his services from the sums collected—not, as many personal-injury lawyers do, deeming such suits primarily for the benefit of the lawyer rather than the client—had spread his repute among the workmen, and later led to his selection as counsel for the union.

And so our committee of three came to Mr. Langdon with Judge Baldwin's order.

"H'm! Put a spoke in your wheel, haven't they?" he said when he had read the order.

"Do we have to pay any attention to that?" said Gilks. "Can't we go ahead anyway? We were going to call the men out at noon to-day."

"Yes—you can go ahead," said Mr. Langdon slowly, and with a meaning look, "but I reckon you'd better not, unless you want to take a vacation and spend it as a guest of the sheriff in the county jail."

"So we can't strike, eh? We've got to go on working for whatever the company sees fit to pay us? What are things coming to when the law takes the side of the rich against the poor in this way?"

"I don't think you've stated the case quite correctly, Mr. Gilks," said Mr. Langdon with a good-humored smile. "The law doesn't take sides; and if it has seemed to favor the rich, it is because they have made more frequent appeals to it. The courts stand equally ready to protect the rights of the poor whenever their attention is called to the invasion of such rights.

"All there is to this case is just this," Langdon went on, crossing his legs and clapping his hands behind his head: "Willard & Flitwood, as attorneys of the company, have filed a bill in which they have likely set up all sorts of things that they can't prove, but which with the affidavits they've probably secured and attached to the bill, made out a *prima-facie* case for the issuance of this restraining order. The time was too short to give you people notice of it, and if Judge Baldwin hadn't issued the order the damage which the bill seeks to prevent would have been done before a hearing could have been

had. But I don't believe he'll hold it over you after our answer is in and we've been heard in the matter.

"Now, I'll go over to the clerk's office," he continued, "and look over the bill and draw up an answer, get some affidavits to meet those attached to the bill, and get this thing to a hearing as soon as possible. Judge Baldwin will, I have no doubt, give us an early hearing."

"And we've got to wait for this, have we?" said Gilks petulantly.

"Yes, you've got to wait," returned Langdon decidedly—"that is if you have any fear of the consequences that I suggested a moment ago. But it won't be long; and in the meantime you may be able to fix things up with the company, so that a strike will not be necessary. It would certainly be much better if you could do that."

"We can fix nothing," snapped Gilks; "the company won't even recognize the union."

"Well, whatever you do, don't call a strike until we get this restraining order set aside."

"No, we'll obey the law," said Waters, "if it's the law that we should obey this order, Mr. Langdon."

"It certainly is the law. I can tell you that positively, without looking in my books for it."

"And you think the judge would 'jug' us, do you, if we called a strike in spite of the order?" asked Battles.

"It would be a flagrant contempt of the court's order, and courts are not usually very lenient in such cases.

"But aside from any personal considerations," Langdon continued in a more serious tone, "you should respect the law. The union can't afford to put itself outside the pale of the law by disregarding its mandates and encouraging lawlessness. No substantial advantage can be gained by any such course. Take my advice, gentlemen: obey the law, and submit your rights to the determination of the court. You can't imperil them by so doing, and you may seriously imperil them by doing otherwise."

"But we're losing valuable time through this thing," said Gilks irritably, "and the company is gaining time. I guess that's what they did it for."

"You may appear to be losing time now," said Mr. Langdon, "but maybe it won't be time lost in the long run. Anyway, I'll see that we lose as little time as possible in getting

this thing to a hearing. I'll go right over to the clerk's office now and take a look at their bill. And say—all of you come back to my office this afternoon. I shall need your help in getting up some affidavits."

The strike was not called that day. The workmen expecting to find the strike-call on the union bulletin board at noon, read there, instead, the restraining order of the court, and the call for a meeting of the union that night.

This meeting was largely in the nature of an indignation meeting, at which there were general and severe strictures upon the company, the law and the courts for what was characterized as a high-handed and outrageous proceeding. A few of the radical members even advocated that the union should pay no attention to the order whatever; but while such speakers were loudly applauded, the soberer majority voted to abide the determination of the matter by the court, as Mr. Langdon had advised.

Langdon lost no time in preparing the defendants' answer to the complainant's bill, and also a number of counter-affidavits. Filing the answer and affidavits, and likewise a motion to set aside the restraining order,

he made application to Judge Baldwin for an early hearing. This last was granted, and Wednesday of the following week, at ten o'clock a.m., was the time set for the hearing.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Hearing of the Case

The news of the issuance of the court order restraining the mill workers from striking, and that the right of the company to an injunction was to be fought out in court, spread rapidly and soon became the absorbing topic of town talk. On Wednesday morning, and well before ten o'clock, the hour set for the hearing, the large room in the court-house was crowded to the doors.

It is not often that large audiences are drawn to hearings in chancery. True, court proceedings have always been of more or less interest to the general public; but this interest has usually been of a character not at all flattering to the popular intelligence and taste. The largest crowds have always thronged our court rooms to see hapless homicides make their legal race with death, or where cases gave promise of sensational and salacious incidents for a morbid and prurient curiosity to feed upon. Whether a sensational press has aroused and stimulated

this curiosity, or simply pandered to it, is hard to say. Probably it has done both. Certainly the daily newspaper has not been chary of space in giving publicity—*ad nauseam*—to cases which in the interest of public morality ought to have been tried behind closed doors.

And yet, there is much that goes on in courts of law that is of real educative value; much that should engage and would well reward the interest of the layman. That great legal luminary, Mr. Blackstone, lamenting the neglect of the study of the law, thought a competent knowledge of this science to be the proper accomplishment of every gentleman and scholar; a highly useful, indeed, essential, part of liberal and polite education.

A fine old gentleman Mr. Blackstone was himself; almost too fine he might nowadays be thought to have been, for he used a large measure for the well-born and a small one for the baser born. In these very democratic days when all men are (in theory at least) equal before the law, an equal obligation might be said to rest upon all to know the law.

In our country, however, the cause for lament is not so much, perhaps, that so few have made a study of the law, as that so many

who have studied it should have felt constrained to seek a living by the practice of it. For this has overcrowded, and to a great extent commercialized, an honorable profession, and encumbered the dockets of our courts with a great deal of unnecessary and unmeritorious litigation.

But let us return to our mutton.

As has been said, the court room was crowded. From the number of Ellerton's "best" people who were present, the occasion took on somewhat the aspect of a society affair, and Mr. Munson of the *Argus*, who was there, in his report of the proceedings for his paper, might have prefaced his notice of the attendance by the formulated society reporter's phrase, "Among those present were, Mr. and Mrs. ————" etc.

But Mr. Munson was not in court simply, or even principally, for the purpose of getting material for a column or two in the *Argus*. Bless you, no! Please remember that Mr. Munson was a stockholder in the Ellerton Iron & Steel Works. He still held those two shares of stock, and was, therefore, a "party in interest" in the pending cause. This fact he sought to impress upon the people in the court room by certain remarks

he let fall in talks with several present when he came in; remarks which were made in a tone loud enough to be heard by others than those immediately addressed and therefore plainly rebutting any inference that they were intended as confidential.

"The present business depression compelled us to reduce wages," he said; "and the men are making a great mistake in giving us any trouble about it. We could get along all right with most of the men by themselves, but the union is stirring up a fuss, and our attorneys are going to test its right to step in between us and the men and dictate to us what wages we shall pay."

To these and other like remarks Mr. Munson sought to give point and emphasis by going inside the bar and seating himself next to Mr. Hartland, and drawing that worthy citizen and heavy mill stockholder into conversation, every now and then looking up and over the court room with a pompous and consequential air.

Indeed, a stranger in the court room would have been much more likely to pick Mr. Munson rather than Mr. Middleton as the man chiefly interested in the case. Mr. Middleton had had a conference with

Mr. Willard the day before in regard to the case, and had now nothing more to say to him about it or, seemingly, any very great interest in it. For with a nod to Mr. Willard and to Mr. Flitwood, who sat behind Mr. Willard at the attorneys' table, and with a like formal greeting to a number of others in the court room he took a seat on one of the rear benches outside the bar.

A close observer might have seen a line or two in Mr. Middleton's face that had but lately made their appearance there.

Edith Middleton came with her father. It was no idle curiosity that had prompted her to ask her father to take her with him. Knowing that the present difference between the workmen and the company was the cause of the quarrel between her brother and father, she had a vague hope that in the pending court proceedings the wage dispute would in some way be adjusted, and that such adjustment would be followed by a reconciliation between Philip and his father. She was, therefore, quite naturally, interested in the hearing and its outcome.

George Hartland, who was in the court room, came and sat down beside Edith, and sought to relieve the tedium of the wait for

the opening of court by his habitual running fire of small talk.

Nearly all the attorneys in Ellerton were gathered inside the bar, drawn to the court room by the unusual character and importance of the proceedings; and they were interestedly discussing the merits of the case among themselves and speculating as to its probable outcome. Besides the common interest in the fortunes of Ellerton's greatest industry they had a professional one in the unusually novel legal proposition involved in the controversy. An injunction to stop a labor strike was, in the opinion of most of the attorneys, stretching the law to rather strange uses, and they were more than curious to hear by what arguments and authorities Willard & Flitwood were going to seek to establish a precedent so unique in its character and so far-reaching in its consequences. They were all quite ready to admit, however, that if it could be done Willard & Flitwood were the men to do it.

They were doubtless of one mind, too, that the attorneys for the mill company would find their greatest obstacle in the inherent difficulty of their side of the case rather than in the strength of the opposing

counsel. Not a few were the looks of commiseration that were turned upon Langdon who, without associate counsel, sat alone on his side of the attorneys' table, examining and arranging upon the table the few authorities he had brought with him, which made but a poor showing against the formidable pile of slip-marked law books heaped up upon the other side of the table. It was the general expectation that he would make just as poor a showing against the leaders of the Ellerton bar when it came to the argument of the case.

"Mr. Langdon must be carrying most of his law in his head," remarked young Hartland to Edith facetiously; "he has very little of it on the table."

"Mr. Langdon?"

"Yes—the attorney for the workmen's union—the man sitting alone there opposite Mr. Willard at the table."

Edith looked over at Mr. Langdon carelessly.

"His head certainly looks big enough to carry it."

"Quite," assented Hartland with a laugh.

Just then Langdon turned his head to one side so that Edith obtained a good look at

his face. What a homely face! was her first thought. Her second thought was that it was a strong face, a masterful one—yes, a strangely attractive one in its rugged masculinity.

"Has he been in Ellerton long?" she asked somewhat absently. "I don't remember to have seen him before."

"Who? Langdon? Oh, not very long," replied Hartland. "He's a comparative newcomer at the bar. Hasn't much business, I guess. Doesn't look as if he had. He certainly doesn't spend much money on his clothes. Just look at those 'hand-me-downs' he's got on. He must have got a discount somewhere because they couldn't fit him."

"He isn't a Beau Brummel, certainly," said Edith; "still he may be a good lawyer." She wondered to herself why she felt like resenting Hartland's disparagement.

"Well, if he is, he'll have a chance to prove it this morning, for he's got the best lawyers in town against him."

At this moment the buzz of talk in the court room was suddenly hushed. A thin, spare man, of not over medium height, with a smooth, close-shaven face, and hair gray almost to whiteness, came in from a side

door of the court room, ascended the bench, and called to the sheriff to open court.

It was Judge Baldwin.

Judge Baldwin had been on the bench of the circuit court for close upon a quarter of a century. First appointed by the governor to fill a vacancy, he had been repeatedly nominated and elected to succeed himself, in the last two elections having been on the judicial ticket of both of the leading political parties.

His long retention upon the bench was not due, however, to any great personal popularity, for he had none of the arts of the politician, and few of the personal qualities which, irrespective of particular fitness for office, make their possessor a formidable candidate in a plebiscite. Of studious habits and tastes, he was given to poring over his books in his library rather than to mixing with men; and this habit is ordinarily attended with some danger to the incumbent of an elective office. A measure of dignified reserve and exclusiveness is, of course, conceded to a wearer of the ermine, but an elective judge holds his office upon a rather precarious tenure who gives free indulgence to a retiring disposition, and is unfortified by exceptional fitness for his office.

Such exceptional fitness, however, in Judge Baldwin's case was evidenced by the united support of the bar of the circuit at each recurring judicial election in which he stood as a candidate. The high regard in which he was held by the bar was not due so much to his legal erudition—marked though that was—as to a rare judicial temper, the calm, unruffled evenness with which he held the scales of justice, uninfluenced by—indeed, not seeing—the litigants in a case, but with eye single to the issues involved. Frail of body and with the pale, impassive, unpassionate face of an ascetic, he hardly seemed a man of flesh and blood, to be moved or influenced by mortal passions and prejudices, but rather like an impersonal instrument of the law, meting out its decrees and mandates according to their inviolable letter.

And so it was that lawyers who practiced at the bar of Judge Baldwin's court, however much they may at times have been disposed to quarrel with the law, had no strictures for the judge.

The sheriff having opened court, Judge Baldwin took up the files which lay upon his desk.

"In the matter of Ellerton Iron & Steel

Works *vs.* Gilks, *et al.*—gentlemen, are you ready?" he said, looking down at the attorneys.

They having signified their readiness, the judge said:

"In the bill of complaint filed in this case, the complainant asks for a temporary injunction to remain in force pending the action. A temporary restraining order was issued, *ex parte*. The defendants with their answer have filed a motion to have the restraining order set aside. The question for hearing this morning, then, is whether the order shall be continued in force until the final decision of the case—that is, whether or not the complainant is entitled to a temporary injunction. I will hear the complainant first in the matter."

And Judge Baldwin with a slight inclination of the head toward Mr. Willard, settled back in his chair.

A proper deference to the demands of brevity in this narrative will not admit of a full report of the very able and exhaustive arguments that both Mr. Willard and Mr. Flitwood brought forward in support of their right to an injunction on behalf of their client, nor of the numerous authorities they cited in support of their contentions.

In brief, their contentions were:

1. That the "strike" or concerted walk-out on the part of the workmen, was unlawful.

2. But if such concerted walk-out was legal, the threatened and impending strike in this case was a strike of the workers' union, and not of the mill employees themselves. That it had been declared, or was about to be declared, on a vote in the union and not on a vote by the employees.

3. That the union was about to order such a strike against the wishes of many, if not the majority of the workmen, who were entirely satisfied with the compensation and conditions of their work, and who were desirous of remaining at work.

4. That by means of threats, coercion and violence, the union, through its members, agents and officers, was about to force all the workmen in the mills to leave their work, notwithstanding their desire to remain at work, and in violation of their contracts with the company; and also, by the same means, to prevent new men going into the mills to take the places of those leaving.

5. That the workers' union was an unincorporated, irresponsible organization, which could not be made to respond in damages.

6. That it was an unlawful combination

and conspiracy among the workmen, having for its object the forcing upon the mill company the recognition of such union as the authoritative agent and representative of the workmen in all their relations with the company, and to prevent the company from dealing with its own workmen directly, and generally to interfere with and obstruct the management of the mills by the company.

When Mr. Willard sat down, after a very able presentation of the law bearing upon the case, following upon Mr. Flitwood's equally cogent presentation and argument upon the facts, Mr. Langdon rose for the defendants.

As has been stated, Langdon had not raised any very great expectations in the minds of the attorneys present; nor, for that matter, in the minds of the other people in the court room. And as he now rose, with apparent diffidence and embarrassment, to meet the strong case made by the complainant's attorneys, there were few who looked for anything short of a spectacle of incompetence in presence of a great emergency.

Lawyers and spectators were, however, destined to be surprised.

There goes a saying, "Beware of the man of one book." A like monitory injunction

might well be given as to a lawyer with a single case. Such a lawyer will concentrate upon that one case the time and thought that the busy lawyer divides among a number of cases. To the former, too, a successful issue, or at all events an adequate handling of a single case, usually means much more than to the latter, enough more to stimulate him to making a most thorough preparation of the case and to his best effort in its presentation.

Langdon had lived, had, indeed, eaten and slept with this case from the time it was placed in his hands, and had thus become so fully charged with it as to make of himself, for the occasion, a legal battery of a most powerful voltage. This early became apparent as he progressed with his argument. The embarrassment which he betrayed when he commenced to speak, natural enough to a lawyer arguing his first important case in the presence of a crowded court room, soon disappeared and left him master of himself, as he was of his case.

A weightier consideration than a prudent economy of space precludes a verbatim report of Mr. Langdon's argument. Such a report would be inadequate either to reproduce the

speech or to account for its effect. The genius of the orator—the essence of eloquence—is too elusive to be seized and transferred to the printed page. The full power of it is felt only in the living presence of the orator, when eye and hand, feature and voice—the whole man, indeed, enforces and adorns the spoken word.

It might be thought that an equity court would not be the most favorable forum for oratorical effort. Such efforts are much more in vogue in law courts before juries. And certainly the average harangues with which our embryonic Erskines split the ears of the groundling jurors—a maximum of sound and a minimum of sense—would be quite out of place in a court of equity, even if in place anywhere. But there is no tribunal, no place, no occasion where word is to be spoken that is forbidden to the true orator who speaks that word fittingly.

Mr. Langdon mistook neither the place nor the judge to indulge in any mere rhetorical pyrotechnics. He would hardly have gone very far if he had. Judge Baldwin was given to winnowing the chaff from the wheat of an argument, and holding verbose and discursive attorneys closely to the issues of a case. But

he did not now check or interrupt Mr. Langdon, even though the latter did make an occasional digression from the points at issue. Judges are inclined to allow some latitude in argument to attorneys who combine the ability to please with the power to convince. Judge Baldwin gave Mr. Langdon not only a close, but a pleased and interested attention, as with masterful resource he forcefully, cogently and eloquently met and combated the points raised by the opposing counsel. Nor did the judge interrupt him when the stress of his argument led him into an impassioned arraignment of the mill company's policy toward its workmen, and to a comparison of this policy as pursued by the president of the company with the more generous attitude and conduct of his son. The company's policy was the traditional policy of capital toward labor, the policy of non-intercourse and of selfish exploitation; a policy that more than aught else was responsible for the strained and warring relations between capital and labor, and of which unionism in the ranks of labor was the direct and necessary fruit. Combination and concert of action among the members of the great army of producers represented an intelligent awakening to the

necessity of concerted action if they were not to see combined capital filch from them more than its just share of the avails of production. He deplored the fact that the strike had so often been used as a weapon of attack rather than of defense. But for this labor should not have all the blame. Capital must share it, in that it had so often pursued a course toward labor that had inflamed its passions and impelled it to crude and unintelligent combat. If labor had thus sinned against the letter of the law, capital had sinned against its spirit. Could capital cry out upon labor, "Peace! Peace!" when it was itself responsible for conditions that made for war? When it sows the wind should it be surprised at its whirlwind harvest? Peace? Peace would never come, peace could never come until the Golden Rule and not the Rule of Gold became the standard of business conduct; until a greedy and sordid striving for self and pelf gave way to a just and fraternal co-operation. Of such co-operation the complainant company, as well as the entire community, had had a striking illustration. Philip Middleton had given a notable object lesson in industrial ethics. By a course of conduct as praiseworthy as it was unusual, he had

set an example to the business world which, if heeded and followed, would make an end to the fratricidal strife between employer and employed.

Langdon now, with warm words of appreciation and praise, spoke of Philip Middleton's relations with the workmen and the company. How he had taken upon himself the humble toil of the mill, and as he had worked with the men, had worked for them. He had not thought it beneath him to join their union and aid them with his counsels. He had helped and inspired them with his friendship and in the fullest measure had gained theirs. He had thrown the weight of his influence against the heavy wage reduction that had precipitated the present conflict, and had labored earnestly for its rescission, even to the peril of his own fortunes.

But he had labored in vain. The father arrogantly rejected the wise counsels of the son. He took counsel, instead, of his self-interest, turned his face against the light, and allowed the jingle of the dollar to drown the still, small voice of his conscience. Deaf to the voice of filial mediation, repelling the overtures of friendly conference, unheeding even the suggestions of expediency, he had

pursued his fatuous course, and now sought the aid of the law in suppressing a rebellion that his own selfish policy had aroused.

Much more of like purport escaped Langdon in the fervor of his speech, unstinted praise for Philip finding antithesis in severe strictures for his father.

To most of the spectators outside the bar in the court room these touches upon the "Middleton affair," as it was known in the parlance of the town gossip, were of much greater interest than the law of the case. There were not wanting, indeed, a few envious persons present who took a secret pleasure in this public castigation of Ellerton's leading citizen by an unsparing advocate; and there were not a few curious glances directed toward Mr. Middleton during Langdon's caustic arraignment.

And how was Mr. Middleton himself affected by this storm of invective? Strangely enough, he showed "a countenance more in sorrow than in anger." His interdict against the mention of his son's name at home, as well as his discouraging all talk about him elsewhere, being due to pride rather than real desire, had only served to create a hunger for the thing he had denied himself. As he

could not now choose but hear, pride insensibly gave way to natural feeling, and Langdon's glowing words of praise for Philip fell upon his heart like a summer shower upon the sun-parched earth. He leaned forward slightly in his seat as if fearful of losing a word that fell from the lips of the speaker. To the censure directed against himself he appeared strangely indifferent, taking it, perhaps, as the necessary price to be paid for what he deemed of greater moment, and much as a submissive penitent might take the penance imposed for promised absolution.

When Langdon finished his speech, and Judge Baldwin, reserving his decision for later announcement, adjourned court until the next morning, Mr. Middleton rose from his seat with the half-dazed look of a man coming out of a stupor. Speaking to no one, not seeing any one, indeed, he urged his way out of the court room through the buzzing, chattering crowd, whose confused voices fell upon his dull ear like the discordant and sinister voices of a troubled dream.

CHAPTER XXV

Lawyer Langdon has a Caller who is not a Client

Edith Middleton followed her father from the court room. If there was that in his face which showed a somewhat chastened spirit, there was nothing in hers that even remotely suggested such a state of feeling. Anger was there, instead, and mortification, and wounded pride; and these expressions were focused in one defiant look that she gave Attorney Langdon as she passed near where he stood, receiving the congratulations of attorneys and others upon his great forensic effort. Langdon caught this look, and, abashed, his eye fell and he mechanically adjusted his disarranged cuff.

Edith's feelings found a more explosive utterance when she and her father reached the street.

"What right had that lawyer to talk about you the way he did, papa? How dared he do it? Why didn't the judge or somebody else stop him? One would have thought

you were on trial for some crime. It was simply disgraceful!"

"Oh, pshaw!" her father laughed. "He's a lawyer. That's his business. Lawyers don't think they earn their fee unless they give the other side a good dressing down. Naturally you're a little surprised at it, as it's the first time you've been in court."

"His business!" Edith retorted angrily. "Well, it ought to be somebody's business to take him to task for it. It was only my dread of making a scene that stopped me from doing it right there in the court room, when he stood there receiving his congratulations upon what he no doubt considers a very brilliant effort."

"I'm mighty glad you didn't, Edith, for people might then have taken what he said about me seriously, and I don't think many did—not even Langdon himself."

It was hard, indeed, for Mr. Middleton to feel unkindly toward Mr. Langdon. For if he was disposed to think him not serious in his strictures upon himself, he made no doubt of his seriousness in what he had said about Philip, and the unreserved and generous praise he had bestowed upon him quite outweighed in Mr. Middleton's mind

the less flattering references to himself.

On the other hand, with Edith, what Mr. Langdon had said in praise of her brother was entirely forgotten in her resentment at his attack upon her father. Her pride as well as her affection had been too deeply wounded for her to consider any counterbalancing facts or extenuating circumstances. Even if she had not been in the court room herself and had but been told what Mr. Langdon had said about her father, it would have been quite enough to arouse her indignation. But to have sat in the court room, the cynosure of a curious, gossiping crowd while the attorney shot forth his shafts of unsparing censure—oh! the thought of it was intolerable.

Her feeling of resentment against Langdon was not any the less strong because he had at first inspired her with a far different feeling. She had not withheld from him the homage that beauty pays to intellect, even though associated with manifest shortcomings as to apparel and person, and so long as Langdon had confined himself to the strict issues of the case Edith had been a pleased listener, with a growing admiration for his ability and talents, and an increasing interest

in the man himself. But the idol which this growing admiration and interest had half formed in her mind was ruthlessly and hopelessly shattered when he trained his powerful intellectual batteries upon her father. Her revulsion of feeling was the more violent because she took it for granted that Mr. Langdon was aware of her presence in the court room; and the thought that this should have failed to act as a deterrent of the personal attack he had made was a severe blow to the pardonable vanity of a sensitive, high-spirited girl who, with the accumulated evidence of many social conquests, could not well have been unconscious of her personal charms.

If, therefore, she hardly had occasion for the feeling of a woman scorned, her anger did, nevertheless, almost reach the point of fury against the man who had been the cause of her humiliation.

Oh, if she could only see him and speak her mind! was her thought. And this thought was strong upon her when, after a hasty luncheon in town with her father, she had left him, and was walking up the east side of the court-house square, intending to do a little shopping before going home. Happening to glance upward, Langdon's street sign,

swinging and creaking rustily in the light wind, arrested her attention.

There are times when inanimate things appear veritably sentient. At that moment Langdon's sign seemed to Edith to be indued with a kind of elfish life and to be swinging and creaking out its joy over Langdon's brilliant effort of the morning and in malicious glee at her own discomfiture.

Palpable though this illusion was, it served as a final lash to her already overwrought feelings and impelled her to a sudden resolve. Giving herself no time for reflection she darted into the doorway and hurried up the stairs. A few steps through the upper hall brought her to Mr. Langdon's door. It stood open, and she entered.

Langdon had but just returned from the court-house, where he had been holding an impromptu reception to gratify the throng of new-found admirers who crowded around him after the adjournment of court. On reaching his office he had thrown off his coat, and when Edith entered was sitting in his shirt-sleeves "taking it easy" after his usual manner, with feet up on his desk, hands behind his head and chair back-tilted. Relieved of the strain which the case just closed

had imposed upon him, he was enjoying that complete relaxation of body and mind which comes so gratefully after sustained effort. He was indulging himself, too, in some pleasant reflections upon the events of the morning, and making them, not unnaturally, the foundation for a few pleasing air-castles of professional advancement.

There was one thing, however, that obtruded itself unpleasantly upon his reflections. This was the look that Edith Middleton had given him as she was passing out of the court room. He had no need to conjecture as to what had inspired it. It must have been his invective against her father. Did she think that he knew she was present in court at the time? Strange as it may seem it was not until after the adjournment of court that Langdon became aware of the presence in the court room of Mr. Middleton and his daughter. He had not seen them come in. In fact he was so much engrossed with the case and his preparation for the argument that he was hardly conscious of the presence of those immediately about the attorneys' table within the bar. What he had said about Mr. Middleton had been directed against him as representing the mill company

and had been prompted by no feeling of ill will toward him personally. But he had sufficient recollection of what he had said to realize that it could not have been very palatable to Mr. Middleton and his daughter while sitting in the court room listening to it; less palatable, doubtless, to his daughter than to Mr. Middleton himself. Langdon had little personal acquaintance with Mr. Middleton. He had none at all with his daughter. He knew that Mr. Middleton had a daughter, but beyond having seen her a few times she was little more to him than an abstraction. The more concrete manifestation of herself that she had given to him at the court-house was at once pleasing and painful. The pleasurable thrill that her beauty inspired made more keen the sudden pang he felt at her angry look.

"Confound it! I wish I could see her and explain," he muttered. "I'd like to tell her"———

With the suddenness of the fabled jinn who came to the rubbing of the magic lamp, Edith Middleton entered the office, as if in answer to Langdon's wish.

For a moment Langdon stared at her as if she had been an apparition. Then, jump-

ing up, he reached for his coat.

"Oh, you needn't put on your coat, Mr. Langdon," she said bitingly, as she approached his desk. "You will appear more like yourself if you remain in your shirt-sleeves."

Langdon nevertheless slipped on his coat, placed a chair for her, in some confusion, and then dropped into his own again.

Edith remained standing in haughty disregard of the invitation to be seated.

"Please don't put too great a strain upon yourself to be polite, Mr. Langdon. After your flagrant breach of ordinary civility in court this morning, politeness on your part now is quite superfluous."

"Miss Middleton, allow me to explain. I"———

Edith stamped her foot. "I want no explanation," she interrupted angrily. "There are some things that can't be explained. You can't explain away a slap in the face. I haven't come to have you explain, but only to tell you what I should have had the courage to tell you to your face in the court room, that the charges and insinuations you made this morning against my father are false. I can't conceive what motive you could have had in making them. But what-

ever your motive was, and however urgent, if you had any of the instincts of a gentleman you would have refrained from making such statements in a crowded court room with my father and me there to hear them. I have heard something about lawyers not being accountable for slanders uttered in court. You doubtless took refuge behind that privilege. But if I were a man you should not slander my father with impunity, and if my brother were here he would know how to make you answer for such an insult."

With every added word that Edith uttered the stress of her feeling increased, and when she spoke of her brother a poignant realization of her loss came upon her as an overwhelming climax, and—she was a woman—she burst into tears and sank sobbing into the chair she had first refused to take.

What man ever remained unmoved at the sight of a beautiful woman in tears? Langdon rose from his chair and stood for a time silent, with his arm resting upon the top of his desk. When the violence of Edith's grief had passed, and Langdon had obtained sufficient control of himself to speak, he said in a voice that yet trembled with emotion:

"Miss Middleton, I wish you had let me

explain. An explanation might not have justified me, but it surely should have mitigated my offense. I wanted to tell you that I did not know that you were in the court room when I was speaking. I did not even know that your father was there. Of course, I should have known this. But a lawyer is sometimes so absorbed in his case that he becomes quite oblivious of his surroundings. He will often, also, in an excess of zeal for his client, and in the heat of argument, say things that in his cooler moments he will himself disapprove. I think, however, that you attached too great significance to what I did say, Miss Middleton. My words of censure were intended rather for the company of which your father is president than for your father personally. Still, in my praise of your brother I was led to say some things in dispraise of your father that would better have been left unsaid, and that certainly would not have been said had I known that you were in the court room. In any case, I should have reflected that a man with such a son as Philip Middleton was little likely to be the hard man that I pictured; and I am quite sure he is not that kind of a man, now that I have learned that he has such a

daughter to defend him.

"Miss Middleton"—Langdon's voice faltered—"I'm sorry to have caused you pain. Believe me, it was unintentional; and I beg that you will pardon the hasty words that escaped me in the unreflecting heat of my argument, words that I now feel were unjust, and that I sincerely regret having uttered."

Now, Edith's surcharged feelings having found relief in tears, she became quite amenable to explanation and excuse. Indeed, Langdon's assurance that he was ignorant of her own and her father's presence in the court room when he was making his argument, removed at once the most potent reason for her resentment against him, which was that he had been guilty of a personal affront to herself and to her father. Cleared of this reproach, what remained of his offense? Why, little more than that in the heat of argument he had been led into an extravagance of language for which he now expressed regret; language which, she reflected, her father had treated lightly, and to which personal pique had doubtless impelled her to give a too serious meaning.

But Edith would hardly have been so ready now to excuse Langdon had not her

quick woman's instinct detected something else. Langdon was not specially adept in concealing his feelings. If he had not quite betrayed them in the unreserved retraction he had made, they must have been revealed in the tone of his voice and the expression of his face. This expression Edith caught in a glance she cast up at him as he finished speaking. How tall he was! He seemed to tower almost to the ceiling. And the face now turned full upon her was no longer a homely face, for under the coercion of deep feeling it bore the imprint of mind, of soul and of character. As Edith lowered her eyes from this brief glance upward she could still feel Langdon's large, dark and wistful eyes reading her face. Did he see the faint color mantling her cheek? If so, he might have divined in that mute symbol the insensible recession of all anger and resentment under an awakened and uplifting consciousness, the most precious to a woman's heart, the consciousness of having inspired the admiration of a man whom she has learned to respect.

And with this consciousness Edith now felt a deep contrition for the hasty and unkind words she had spoken. How patient he had

been with her through it all! Yes, his had been the patience of large natures which are like the deep and swift-flowing rivers that bend and subdue to their own undeviating course the obstacles that arise to impede their mighty flow! Instead of accusing, Edith now felt accused. She felt that she had done an injury instead of having suffered one.

"Mr. Langdon," she said, as she rose from her chair and stood before him with eyes downcast and with a deepened flush upon her face, "I am afraid I have been too hasty. I see now that I should have allowed you to explain. It would have saved you from the unkind and unjust things I said, and myself from the mortification I feel at having said them. You asked my pardon. I'm not sure that there is anything for me to forgive after what you have said, but"—a pretty little foot emerged from its concealing skirts, and softly chafed the floor—"I hope you can forget the mean things I said, as well as my childish exhibition of weakness. It must have bored you dreadfully!"

"Bored me! Not a bit," said Langdon impulsively. "And as to forgetting, I don't want to forget anything that's happened—now that you want me to."

"Oh!" she said looking up at him archly, "you can say nice things, too, can't you?"

How lovely she looked to Langdon just then! He felt his knees actually shaking.

"But I musn't take any more of your time," she said, and then as she turned to go:

"We ought not be enemies now, at any rate, Mr. Langdon, even if we can't be friends."

"Why can't we be friends, Miss Middleton?"

"Well, friends, then," and with a sweet smile she extended her hand.

Langdon took it in his own, and its soft pressure sent a thrill through him like an electric shock.

Did she have some sense of this? For she quickly withdrew her hand, and with a light and cheery "good-bye," she turned and hastened from the room.

Langdon stood and looked after her. He heard the rustle of her dress as she passed through the hall, the light patter of her feet upon the stairs, and he strained his ear to catch the last dying sounds of her vanishing footsteps. For some time he still stood leaning against his desk, with his head bowed, in a dreamy, blissful reverie. Absently he

then sank into his chair, his arms sought the support of the desk, and with a great sigh he buried his face in his hands.

CHAPTER XXVI

The Decision of the Case

Judge Baldwin denied the application of the mill company for a preliminary injunction, and granted Langdon's motion to vacate the *ad interim* restraining order.

As the design and scope of this narrative will not admit of its assuming the function of a legal treatise or of a law report, Judge Baldwin's very learned, lucid and scholarly opinion announcing his decision, cannot be given. Nor can the report and page be cited where this opinion can be found. For the lay reader must know that it is not the custom to publish the opinions of our State circuit and district courts. In some cases this is much to be regretted. Many of our *nisi prius* courts are presided over by judges who are not only men learned in the law, but who possess also the rare gift of literary expression which makes their legal opinions a pleasing as well as a sound exposition of the law. Their decisions, however, are not final authority, and so are denied entrance

into the sheep-bound volumes of legal precedent.

It is still more to be regretted, however, that our judicial system is unprovided with a legal censorship that should exclude from publication a considerable portion of the opinions of our supreme courts. Such a suggestion may well seem in derogation of the august incumbents of these lofty judicial seats. For, truly, the elevation of a man to the supreme bench is an apotheosis. This man is now become a god, and his Olympian fulminations are heard with the awesome deference due to deliverances from so high a source. Mark you now: From the supreme bench of a State, hardly out of its swaddling clothes of statehood, comes an opinion from the Honorable Mr. Littlewit, or the like Honorable Mr. Bigbelly. With tedious prolixity of statement and labored inconsequence of argument he stumbles haply upon right conclusions from false premises—or the reverse—and straightway this opinion is bruited abroad as an authoritative declaration of the law, and, when incorporated in a printed State Report, enters that legal Valhalla over whose portals are inscribed the mystic and compelling words, *stare decisis*. Unfortunately

it is not allowed to rest there undisturbed, but under the exorcism of the indefatigable case lawyer it bobs up in this court and that, a *monstrum horrendum*, to fright the souls of fearful adversary attorneys, or, it may be, to obscure the vision and paralyze the arm of a conscientious judge.

But if the quality of many of the opinions of our courts of last resort leaves much to be desired, the quantity of output of these opinions is something truly appalling. Suggestive words were those used by a certain learned judge in one of his opinions: "The difficulty is not so much to know the law as it is to know where to find it." Very true. And the difficulty in finding it is becoming greater and greater with the constantly increasing number of the printed reports that are looked upon as its repositories. With the briefing of every important case the lawyer is confronted with the necessity of wading through a perfect wilderness of decisions, with but the indifferent aid of voluminous digests, to search out cases that either parallel his own or have some bearing upon it; never quite sure, however, that the opposing counsel will not at the last confound him with a decision directly in point which

has escaped his diligence, and the force of which he has had no time to break.

It is not surprising that representative men in the legal profession, finding themselves floundering in a veritable Serbonian bog, should have sent up a cry for extrication by a codification of the law. Certainly that or something else is needed to facilitate the application and administration of the law, and to lift from both bench and bar the heavy incubus of case law that is fast becoming intolerable.

But to proceed with our story. Judge Baldwin having vacated the restraining order, the strike committee were left free to call out the men.

The judge, however, in concluding his opinion, offered some words of friendly counsel. The law, he said, had not imposed upon courts the duty nor given them the right to pass upon the merits of disputes of the character of the one pending. The court could, therefore, only take cognizance of the strict legal rights of the contending parties. It could concern itself only to protect personal and property rights from invasion, and to that end hold itself ready to restrain any acts that were plainly violative of such rights and

were of a nature to demand the immediate interposition of the court. Upon the parties themselves rested the responsibility, the moral obligation, indeed, to settle their differences over terms and conditions of employment, on a basis of justice, equity, and good conscience. And the court could not forbear to express the hope that the mill company and its workmen, actuated by a spirit of fairness, might speedily and peaceably adjust their differences by such mutual concessions as were necessary to that end, and thus avoid the losses, hardships and suffering that a protracted strike would necessarily entail.

When the strike committee waited upon Mr. Langdon after the announcement of the court's decision, he called their attention to the closing words of the judge's opinion and prevailed upon them to wait until he should have a conference with the mill officials to see if something could not be done along the line of the judge's suggestions.

Mr. Langdon seemed now, indeed, for some reason, anxious to have the trouble adjusted, and his anxiety in this direction was great enough to overcome his repugnance to a personal interview with Mr. Middleton.

In the natural course of things Mr. Langdon

should have sought this interview at Mr. Middleton's office. He went to his house in the evening, instead. Of course, Mr. Middleton was a busy man, whose time during the day was valuable, and Mr. Langdon may not have felt justified in encroaching upon it. This might serve as a sufficient explanation of his call at the house were it not for the fact that he was unusually careful about his toilet on the evening in question, devoting an amount of time to it out of all proportion to the exigencies of a purely business errand.

Arriving at the house and calling for Mr. Middleton, he was shown into the library by the trim little housemaid who answered his ring, and here Mr. Middleton shortly joined him.

CHAPTER XXVII

Sociology

Mr. Middleton was much more affable than Langdon had expected to find him. He waived aside the apologies Langdon was in haste to make for his inconsiderate words in the court room.

"Oh, you've already been taken to task for that, I believe," he said, giving him a knowing look and smile.

Langdon flushed. How much had Miss Middleton told her father? he wondered.

"Yes, I have," he said in evident embarrassment. "But I hope I've made my peace with your daughter, Mr. Middleton."

"You seem to have. Your powers of persuasion were as effective with her, evidently, as they were with the court."

"I wish that they might be equally effective with you, Mr. Middleton."

"In what way, Mr. Langdon?"

"To make you willing to settle this trouble with your workmen amicably on the basis suggested by Judge Baldwin and in accord-

ance with his expressed wish."

Mr. Middleton's face clouded.

"If Judge Baldwin were running a business like mine himself he would think and talk more about men and markets than about justice, equity and good conscience. That sounds all right and very pretty, but it isn't business—not by a long shot. A man running a business like ours has got to consider business conditions; he can't allow himself to be influenced by so-called moral considerations.

"Now, what are the business conditions that confront our company?"

Mr. Middleton here lighted a cigar.

"Will you join me?" he said, offering one to Langdon.

"Thank you, Mr. Middleton, but I don't smoke."

"Don't smoke? You deny yourself a great luxury, Mr. Langdon."

"Possibly, possibly," replied Langdon, "but from the little experience I have had with smoking I should be inclined to doubt that. I once tried a cigar, but I have never been able to muster up sufficient courage to try another."

Mr. Middleton laughed, settled back in his

easy chair, and after drawing a few whiffs from his cigar with evident satisfaction, he continued:

"Well, as I was saying, Mr. Langdon, what are the business conditions that confront us? Why, a sluggish market for our output and a glutted labor market to draw upon to produce that output. We can man our mills twice over with men at the reduced wages we are now paying. Why should we pay more? The concern of a manager of a business corporation should be to make it produce dividends. To that end he must conduct the corporation as a trust in behalf of the stockholders. If his conscience is to figure in it at all, it must be quickened by considerations that make for the financial welfare of the stockholders, and his duty begins and ends with the exercise of his best efforts to promote their interests."

"You have undoubtedly stated the prevailing business view, Mr. Middleton, and, in a strict business sense, perhaps the correct one," said Langdon; "but in a larger sense is it the better or the correct view? Within the last score years or so, large business corporations have multiplied at a surprising rate; and at about the same ratio of increase

—which must be more than a mere coincidence —have been the disturbances in the ranks of labor. Doesn't this suggest, Mr. Middleton, that the management of these corporations has been more satisfactory to their stockholders than to their employees? In other ways, too, it seems to me, these huge corporations have given plain evidence that something has been lacking to make them an altogether beneficent social force. Thus far we have done nothing more than to create veritable Frankenstein monsters: big and powerful, complete with bones, muscles and skin, but soulless and pitiless. To further the one purpose of their creation and management—the producing of dividends—they have evaded the law, overawed courts, corrupted legislators, levied tribute upon the public through fictitious stock, and, when not checked by opposing unions, have pauperized labor."

"Whew!" said Mr. Middleton with a laugh, not taking Langdon too seriously. "You evidently didn't exhaust all your ammunition in court. But look here, Langdon, these corporations—these Frankenstein monsters, as you call them—are they not a natural evolution of the times? This is an industrial,

wealth-producing age, and are not our large corporations the necessary, the inevitable outgrowth of the age, and but expressive of its spirit? You must admit that they are great and valuable economic agencies in the concentration of capital for the greater production and distribution of wealth. You wouldn't turn back the hands on the dial of industrial progress by doing away with them, would you?"

"No, I wouldn't do away with them," replied Langdon, "but I would infuse a soul into them. I wouldn't have them so intent upon earning dividends as to violate the law and trample upon individual rights in order to produce dividends. I wouldn't have one standard of ethics for the directors in their private lives and another—or none at all—in their corporate management. I would have moral obligations rest as heavily upon the management as business obligations. I would have corporations conducted not solely as trusts in behalf of the stockholders, but also as trusts in behalf of their employees and the public as well. Instead of having the one and only concern of the management that of making a favorable financial showing to the stockholders at the annual meeting,

I would have it not foreign to a faithful stewardship to have showings at such meetings of wages increased, hours of labor shortened, and conditions of labor ameliorated; of skilful labor developed and encouraged, of output bettered, and prices reduced."

Mr. Middleton smiled.

"Corporation management like that, Mr. Langdon, would last only until the stockholders got a chance to vote it out. And you couldn't get people to buy stock in a concern that was run on any such altruistic lines."

"Oh, of course, such corporate management would have to have the support of the stockholders," said Langdon. "But such support will be given when stockholders—men with money to invest—obey the dictates of an enlightened conscience in the investment of their money; when the main consideration will not be, where can they get the largest dividends on their money, but where can they invest it to the highest social usefulness; when they will feel themselves morally responsible for the conduct of a corporation in which they hold stock, and will not complacently draw their dividends without a thought or care as to how those

dividends were earned; when dividends accruing from corporate management that has violated the law, oppressed labor and filched extortionate profits from the public, will be looked upon as tainted money, that spreads the infection of its source in whatever channels it may be applied."

Mr. Middleton again gave Langdon an indulgent smile.

"You want an industrial millennium, Mr. Langdon, which is not yet, and can't be. As I said before, this is a commercial, industrial and wealth-producing age. The *zeitgeist*, as the Germans call it, impels men to an unprecedented activity along industrial and commercial lines. And the motive it supplies is a selfish, not an altruistic one—that is to say, not altruistic in the ordinary sense of the word; although able men have pointed out that the present great movement toward wealth and industrialism is a necessary movement in order to lay broad foundations of material well-being for the society of the future."

"Yes," said Langdon, "Matthew Arnold quotes Mr. Gladstone to that very effect. But, while admitting the necessity of the movement toward fortune-making and exag-

gerated industrialism, and allowing that the future may derive benefit from it, Matthew Arnold insists, at the same time, that the passing generations of industrialists are sacrificed to it. Arnold does not ask—as he well might have asked—whether this sacrifice is necessary. And if the inherent and ineradicable spirit of Mammon in the great mass of industrialists makes the sacrifice inevitable in most cases, still should it not be a serious question with every thinking man whether he, individually, will sacrifice himself upon the altar of this insatiate Moloch of commercialism?"

"But," Mr. Middleton interposed, "doesn't the alternative involve just as great a sacrifice? Business success demands business methods —a working with, not counter to, the commercial spirit of the age. Run your business on humanitarian lines and, ten to one, you run it into bankruptcy."

"Well," said Langdon, "if the chances of bankruptcy from such humanitarian management were not any greater than ten to one, it might be worth trying as an industrial object lesson. But I don't believe that the chances of failure would be as great as that. In fact, I don't see why such a management

should involve failure at all. I grant you, dividends, or the financial returns from invested capital, might be less—and when I admit that I may seem to be giving away my whole case—but are not these returns, in the main, greater than they should be? Is not the unearned increment of wealth, as it has been called, responsible for most of our social ills? Isn't it withdrawing an increasing number from the ranks of the producers of wealth and adding them to the ranks of the idle rich, establishing a monied aristocracy that makes for a sharper cleavage of classes, with the consequent jealousies, strifes, baneful emulations and unrest; and does it not pile up colossal fortunes that make their possessors monied kings more powerful for oppression than political kings ever were?"

"Well, what would you have, Mr. Langdon—Socialism?"

"No. At all events, not as expounded by its latter-day advocates. I should not favor any system of social reformation that was incompatible with the largest individual freedom, and which did not give the widest scope for individual effort. As a matter of fact, most of the present-day propagandists of Socialism go far beyond its greatest apostle

in their demands. Karl Marx looked for the new social order to come only through the slow processes of evolution, and laid principal stress upon the ultimate passing of capitalism as the dominant social force. It is quite possible that some form of collectivism will be the social order of the future, but it must come as a natural, not an artificial, growth. No abstract system can be imposed—grafted, as it were—upon society. A man who essays any such made-to-order reconstruction of society—not to speak of the presumption of the thing—must encounter the insuperable difficulty of formulating a social scheme of such universality that it should not only be acceptable to the present generation, but also meet the needs of generations yet unborn."

"I quite agree with you there, Mr. Langdon. Every time, every age, has its appointed work, and the prevailing social conditions will be such as necessarily result from the doing of that work, and, in turn, best aid the doing of it. It seems to me not only unwise, but futile, to attempt to change or modify the existing social order which has its excuse—its reason for existing—in the character and trend of the age."

"But if you mean by that, Mr. Middleton,

must we look for the larger destiny of a race or of a people. And as every man is the master of his own destiny, so, to the extent that he is a unit of the whole, he holds the destiny of the world in his hands, and is not only the keeper of his own conscience but of the conscience of the world."

"You are placing a heavy responsibility upon the individual, Mr. Langdon," said Mr. Middleton with a smile; "a responsibility that few men are either conscious of or would care to actively assume, if they were. Any man who places himself in the way of the great mass of moving humanity to obstruct or change its course is crushed under its weight. He simply makes himself a martyr to his fanatical and futile zeal."

"Fanatical, sometimes, but not always futile, Mr. Middleton. You must admit that there have been a few great souls in the world who, with the fulcrum of a divine endowment, have moved the world and changed the current of its history. True enough, they have often been martyrs to their zeal. Martyrdom, in some form or other, seems to be the logical portion of these great souls; and they themselves have not more clearly divined their great mission in the world than they

true that to no such extraneous sources must we look for the larger destiny of a race or of a people. And as every man is the master of his own destiny, so, to the extent that he is a unit of the whole, he holds the destiny of the world in his hands, and is not only the keeper of his own conscience but of the conscience of the world."

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their great mission in the world than they have foreseen their own Calvary at the end."

A shade crept into Mr. Middleton's face. Was he for the moment mindful of a certain young man upon whom he had forced a measure of martyrdom for conscientious action?

"Oh, to be sure, the world has been benefited by the lives of its great reformers," he said, after a moment's silence. "On the other hand, it would likewise be benefited if there were a less number of people who think they have a genius for reforming society, and who keep it in a continual ferment by exploiting their panaceas for its evils. They only succeed in fostering and augmenting the social discontent. It seems to me it's better to accept conditions as we find them and make the best of them."

"Perhaps we do have too many reformers, or would-be reformers," returned Langdon. "It is no light thing to say, and it is given to but a few to truthfully say, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world'; but the full justification of these few appears in the results they have produced. Still, without minimizing the importance and value to society of our preachers of reform,

we must in the present age, I think, look to the laymen to give the greatest impetus and furtherance to social betterment. If we accord to the preachers their proper place and exalted mission as inspirers of humanity, it will not be invidious to say that having, as a rule, little first-hand knowledge of the conditions they seek to ameliorate, their proposals for such amelioration are, in the main, academic and impracticable. Men in the active walks of life—business men, our great captains of industry and commerce—these are the ones to give a new trend to the age—an altruistic trend, instead of a selfish and self-centred one."

"Any such change as that, Mr. Langdon, would imply a change in human nature. Selfishness is the great human motive power. It's the very main-spring of our industrial movement and progress."

"And at the same time it is at the bottom of most of our social troubles, Mr. Middleton. Of course, it is useless to declaim against the selfishness of the world, and to try to check it by making a purely moral appeal. But let an appeal be made to selfishness itself. Undoubtedly, the prime object business men have in view in their varied activities

is the furtherance of their own welfare and happiness. How will it be, then, when they come to see that their real welfare and happiness are inevitably advanced by giving an altruistic instead of a self-centred trend to their activities; when, from the analogy of the unit of the family, they reach the wider conception of the unity of the whole human race, and see that the welfare of the individual is indissolubly linked with the welfare of all mankind?"

"Yes, very true," said Mr. Middleton; "when they see all that. But they are blind to anything of the kind now, and few could be brought to see it."

"From some eyes the scales have already fallen, Mr. Middleton. This is attested by the princely benefactions of some of our wealthy men. True, these benefactions usually come from men who have virtually retired from business, and much of their giving is of a kind that might be termed philanthropic dumping. It seems to me that their great wealth would have been more wisely and beneficently applied had it been retailed throughout the active years of their lives, and not left to an eleventh-hour wholesale distribution. Such a course—a giving

as you go—would prevent the useless and burdensome accumulation of vast individual wealth, which is really an abnormal growth upon our social body politic, just as a tumor is upon the physical body; and if remedial agencies are not early and persistently applied, a surgical operation is necessary in the end, if one wishes to get rid of it."

"You musn't push that analogy too far, Mr. Langdon," said Mr. Middleton laughing. "You won't find many, certainly, who will see anything malignant in a wealth tumor."

"Well, one kills about as many as the other. A physical tumor isn't really so bad, though, for it can only kill the body. The other kind often kills the soul of the man who nourishes its insidious and unwholesome growth."

"I don't know about that, Langdon. What nourishes wealth? Isn't it energy, thrift, enterprise, bold initiative?"

"I'm not speaking of a competence, Mr. Middleton, which is something that every man is justified in getting for himself, if he can. What I have reference to is great wealth, a great fortune. And it will hardly be denied that other things besides energy, thrift, enterprise and initiative go into the acquiring of that."

"Even so, Mr. Langdon. It is little of this, comparatively, that a man can devote to his own personal use. He puts it all, virtually, back into the channels of trade and business."

"Ah! but he never loses control of it, Mr. Middleton. It is his to do what he pleases with it; and what he pleases to do with it is usually to use it solely as a means for the further accumulation of wealth, to make it wholly subservient to the mania for mere money-getting which has come to possess him. To this end there is a fierce and unwholesome rivalry among men of wealth. All seem beset, obsessed, by the same evil spirit of gain, and it becomes a mad and frenzied race for monied supremacy in which the public is rather exploited than beneficently served."

"The public may sometimes be exploited, Mr. Langdon," said Mr. Middleton, "but it is hardly true to say that it is not at the same time served. Grant that the motive prompting the activities of our men of wealth is a selfish and sordid one, the public profits by these activities, does it not? Do they not extend manufactures, commerce, transportation—business generally, and multiply

the conveniences, comforts and luxuries of living?"

"But we are looking just now at the ethical side of the question, Mr. Middleton. Certainly, society does profit by the varied activities of its men of wealth. Still, I think the ethical standards of business might be vastly raised without depriving society of any practical benefits. Let me go to art for an analogy. Have the great works of art been produced by the men who were counting the money they were going to make out of their work, or by those who were careless of any material return, and were wholly absorbed in bringing their work up to the perfection of their high ideals, making it, in short, an end in itself and not simply a means to material ends? Is not the true spirit of high and beneficent endeavor represented by such men as Agassiz, who said he hadn't time to make money, or by a Spinoza, who refuses a legacy, fearing that the care of it will affect the quality of his work? Now, something of the same spirit ought to prevail in business. Business, industry, commerce, and art, literature and philosophy, are, in a sense, co-ordinates in the world's work. High ideals should not be considered

any more foreign to one than to the other. An artist should not be a business man in his work, but a business man should be an artist in his. What a high tone will come to business with the infusion of this artistic spirit; when business men will strive for excellence rather than gain, and will gauge their success, not as now, by the number of dollars they have made, but by the perfection of their work, the advancement, comfort and happiness of those associated with them in it, and by the measure of its contribution to the general social welfare."

A brief silence ensued upon Langdon's last words. Mr. Middleton sat thoughtfully drawing at his cigar and ringing the smoke as he exhaled it. Secretly, he could not help warming toward Langdon; for his ingenuous, even if unpractical views were of the same pattern with those held by his own son, and altogether futile were his efforts to close his heart to such reminders.

Scattering the smoke of his cigar with a final expulsive blow, he said:

"And now, Mr. Langdon, I suppose the bearing of all this lies, as Jack Bunsby would have said, 'in the application on it.'"

Langdon smiled.

"We've gone pretty far afield, Mr. Middleton. Much of our discussion can have no immediate bearing upon the matter in hand. Whatever present application any of it has, however, I will leave you to make."

Mr. Middleton may have been influenced by what Langdon had already said, or—a more likely supposition, perhaps—by what he subsequently said, when he tactfully turned the conversation upon Philip Middleton, and thus gave Mr. Middleton what he so much hungered after: the opportunity for a confidential talk about his son. At all events, when they came to take up the immediate matter in hand, Langdon found Mr. Middleton not averse to entertaining his suggestions for a settlement of the pending trouble at the mills. And the interview closed with Mr. Middleton saying:

"Well, Mr. Langdon, just hold the men off for two or three days, and we'll see what we can do. I'll have a talk with Mr. Hartland to-morrow, and see how he feels about the matter. If the men are disposed to be reasonable, perhaps we can reach an amicable basis of settlement."

With this encouragement Mr. Langdon rose to go. Then, as if the thought were one

of first impression, he said:

"Oh, while I'm here, Mr. Middleton, I trust it will not be too great a presumption if I ask to see your daughter."

"Presumption? Certainly not, Mr. Langdon," said Mr. Middleton with an appreciative smile. "I'm sure she will be glad to have you stay. If you'll just step over to the drawing-room I'll call her."

Leading the way out of the library across the hall, Mr. Middleton drew aside the portieres of the drawing-room, and requesting Langdon to be seated he went up-stairs and announced to Edith the unexpected caller who waited below.

CHAPTER XXVIII

From the Library to the Drawing-room.

Oh, the wonder, the mystery, the glory, the fearfulness of sex! That strange and mysterious duality of organized life. The positive and negative generation of nature's great dynamo. Life's primal, elemental and fundamental force—measuring the fullness, richness and the joy of life by the amperes of its dynamic energy!

The highest manifestation of this force—the love of man for woman, has ever been a fruitful theme for poets and romancists. Love has been their absorbing and all-sufficient *motif*, and for them it has had neither material essence nor analogue, nor any earthly alloy. In their rhapsodies it has been a heaven-born flame, kindling in the heart of man the noblest, the loftiest aspirations, and lighting him to the way Elysian. What beautiful illusions, truly, have been spun for our delectation by these imaginative poets of verse and prose! And yet, are they not to be envied who can long retain such

illusions unshattered by the cold, prosaic facts of experience?

The love of man for woman! No man ever escaped it. No man ever can or would escape it. In that trinity of appetite: hunger, thirst and sex, the last is easily first. For the greater part of the race, indeed, Cupid and Venus have ever been the tutelar deities. And what a part, too, they have played in mundane affairs! In the great drama of life, of the world's history, they have been the real protagonists, even though Mars and Minerva may have held the center of the stage.

The story of the abduction of Helen and the resultant Trojan war may be mythological in its facts, but it is deeply true in its symbolism. The learned and philosophic, not to say metaphysical, historian, given to assuming a subjective rather than objective attitude toward the world, is prone to dignify the narrative of an important event with an imposing producing cause, and his pages are sometimes, therefore, not so informing as to the true genesis of the epoch-making events of history as are the more intimate memoirs of a court chronicler or the journal of a contemporaneous diarist. These latter

records often disclose that great events have frequently had apparently adventitious causes: notably, that as in the affairs of individuals so, often, in the larger affairs of nations, there has been "a woman in the case"; and great things have fallen out more through feminine intrigue than studied policy; through the secret machinations of some female kitchen-cabinet rather than through the deliberations of august councils of state. Indeed, it would seem as if woman, denied a direct share of political control, had determined to requite herself and to secure such share by indirection. It is worthy of note, certainly, that in one country under whose organic law women are precluded from succession to the throne, there, by the irony of fate, woman has always had the greatest political influence, and in spite of its Salic Law that country during some of the most important periods of its history has found itself subject to the rule of a powerful though covert gynocracy.

The love of man for woman!—to revert to our text after the orthodox manner. Old Father Time, with his inexorable scythe, has been no greater leveler than has Cupid with his bow. The proponents of a universal

democracy might well canonize the little god and make him their patron saint; for he has always been a thorough-paced democrat. Recking not of rank or station, he shoots his twin darts linking high and low degree: A wealthy Boaz with a Ruth gleaning in his fields (*fin de siecle*, his typewriter), a King Ahasuerus with an Esther, a humble virgin of his realm, or a Goethe and a Christiane, mirrored in the Faust and Gretchen of the poet's creation. Cupid's method, in short, is the simple one of natural selection. And he will have his way in spite of the artificial and conventional barriers that are set up to divert his true course. He will often overleap these barriers with a morganatic marriage, or, in the last extremity, by those other left-handed nuptials in which he himself is the only celebrant.

The love of man for woman! What has it done for man? It has made him a god, and it has made him a devil; a wise man and a fool. It has impelled him to deeds of noblest daring and self-sacrifice, and it has been the paltry mess of pottage for which he has sold his birthright. It has been his great strength, and his pitiful weakness; the lodestar whose bright ray has guided

his steps into the path of life, and the treacherous *ignis fatuus* that has lured him into the morass of sensuality and death. It has been Beatrice—Heavenly Love—inspiring a Dante to pen a "Vita Nuova" and a "Divine Comedy," and it has been Delilah robbing a Samson of his strength and his sight, or a Cleopatra transforming a noble Antony into a weak voluptuary by the infatuation of her thrice-sold charms.

Well, now, with all this thundering in the index of this chapter, will the reader see an anti-climax in what is to follow—a plain and unadorned page or two of incidents growing out of that most common of all social phenomena, the love of a man for a maid?

We have seen Mr. Langdon in court, strong in argument, in intellectual mastery of his case, and fearless in his advocacy of the rights of labor and in denunciation of its supposed oppression. We have just now seen him, not a whit abashed, boldly maintaining his somewhat radical social views before a man to whom such views were little likely to be very agreeable. Is this, then, the same person that we now see in the drawing-room of the Middleton mansion awaiting Miss Middleton in a fever of expectancy?

Yes, the same, and yet not the same, either. Strange that the mere passing from the library to the drawing-room should have wrought such a change in him. Here he sits in a straight-backed chair—the most uncomfortable chair he could find, of course—sitting on it rather than in it, it should be said, for he took up less than half the seat of it, deeming it, doubtless, too great a presumption to get all the comfort there was in the chair by occupying the whole of it. Now, Mr. Langdon, it will be remembered, was a tall man, and a due proportion of his tallness was distributed in his legs. As he now sat, therefore, with feet firmly planted on the floor and with the meager embrace of the chair as before stated, he hardly presented the picture of a man at his ease.

There were not wanting other signs of perturbation. Several times he drew his pocket-handkerchief to wipe the gathering moisture from hand and brow; and had one placed a hand upon his breast over the region of his heart, he would have discovered the rapid fire of that sympathetic organ which evidences its advance upward into the mouth. From time to time he cast furtive glances around the room, only to be increasingly

disquieted by every fresh evidence that met his eye of its rich and elegant furnishing. A veritable Aladdin's palace it seemed to him, and he an intruder within its awesome precincts. However much he would have been disappointed, it would not have greatly surprised him had the maid appeared with the conventional "not at home" to signify Miss Middleton's refusal to see him.

Would she, indeed, see him? was his disturbing query. True, her father had said that she would be glad to have him stay. But with no certainty that he had ingratiated himself into that gentleman's good opinion he could not be sure that Mr. Middleton would be averse to having him subjected to a snub at the hands of his daughter in retaliation for his excess of zeal on behalf of the mill workmen. Nor was he at all sure that he had found any favor in the eyes of Miss Middleton herself that would make her unwilling to administer such a snub. Some resentment over his speech in court might still be smoldering in her heart which his presence might blow into open flame, making her welcome this opportunity to humiliate him. Even if that wound had been healed, the league of friendship that

had been struck between them at his office might have been on her part only a truce to open hostility, not an invitation to the closer acquaintance which he now sought. He had, moreover, a poignant realization of the disparity of wealth and social position between them—barriers that might well make her reluctant to receive him as a caller at her home.

In short, Langdon was in that state of self-depreciation and disparagement, of extreme modesty as to personal merit, that men of ingenuous nature fall into when making their first advances in an affair of the heart, which leads them to magnify the difficulties of their situation, and makes them keenly apprehensive of an unfavorable issue.

And now there falls upon Langdon's ear the soft rustle of a dress upon the stairs. His heart almost stops beating.

Is it maid or mistress?

A maid it was—the fairest that Langdon had ever looked upon; and sovereign mistress of his heart was she now to be forevermore!

The golden chain which began its forming the day she was at his office, and which had been growing link by link through the insensible forging of his imagination and fancy,

received its last link and its lock, holding him in its irrevocable enslavement, as the most transporting form of feminine loveliness now came up to him and greeted him cordially.

Langdon had just presence of mind enough to rise and stammer out:

"You see, Miss Middleton, I—I am early availing myself of one of the privileges of friendship—we were to be friends, you know."

"That's right," Edith said gaily as she threw herself easily upon a luxurious divan that made a most charming setting for her pretty figure. "I hope you and papa are friends, too, now that you have had a talk with him. He isn't such a wicked man after all, is he?"

"Wicked?" said Langdon as he reseated himself stiffly. "I ought to be the last man to say so now, since he has been so generous as to permit me to see his daughter."

"Oh!" Edith laughed, "you mustn't rest the whole case on that, Mr. Langdon, for he knows what happened the last time you saw me."

"So it seems," said Langdon, throwing his right leg over his left and then quickly bringing it to the floor again. "But he assured me that I had made my peace with you,

"Do take a more comfortable chair, Mr. Langdon."

Miss Middleton, so there could hardly have been any malice in his allowing me to see you."

Langdon here made a try of his left leg over his right, but as hastily put that down also when he found its elevation equally ineffective as an aid to his composure.

"Oh, no very deep malice, perhaps; but do you know, Mr. Langdon, he has commissioned me to 'put on the gloves with you'—that's the way he put it. He says you have some strange ideas about things."

"Oh, he did, did he?" said Langdon, illustrating some rather strange ideas about drawing-room sitting postures by grasping the back of his chair with both hands, shooting his feet backward, and tilting the chair. Then remembering that he was not sitting with other lawyers around the court-house stove, he let the chair down, tangled his feet under it, and clasped his hands on top of his head.

"Do take a more comfortable chair, Mr. Langdon," said Edith, secretly amused at Langdon's all too apparent embarrassment.

"No, thank you, I'm quite comfortable," replied Langdon, and then augmented his appearance of discomfort by throwing an arm over the back of the chair, which being

rather high made his position faintly suggestive of an arboreal atavism.

"I'm sure you can't be in that straight-backed chair, Mr. Langdon. Take this chair," Edith insisted, indicating a large, upholstered spring rocker near her.

With considerable diffidence Langdon left his chair and seated himself in the rocker with anything but Chesterfieldian grace.

"Now tell me, what have you and papa been talking about?" Edith said, settling herself back upon the divan and giving Langdon an assuring look and smile. "This horrid trouble at the mills, I suppose."

"Yes, I came to see if we couldn't effect a settlement of it," said Langdon, giving his chair a short rock and inwardly wondering whether it would not have been better had he confined himself to this business.

"Oh, I do hope it will be settled," said Edith, giving Langdon an appealing look as if it lay entirely in his power to make the settlement.

"Yes, so do I," said Langdon, with an impulsiveness that left no doubt that settlement would have been made instanter now that she desired it, if it had been in Langdon's power to effect it.

"It seems to me the men are very foolish to go out on a strike now when times are so hard and there are so many men out of work."

"Yes, they are," returned Langdon, giving his chair another short rock and having recourse to his handkerchief.

"Under the present business conditions," Edith pursued using a set phrase for which she must have been indebted to her father, "the men ought to be willing to work for less, it seems to me."

"Yes, they ought," assented Langdon whose eye at that moment fell upon the daintiest little blue silk slipper that modestly protruded from my lady's skirts; and this bewitching accessory to her loveliness sent Langdon off into a number of short, nervous rocks of his chair and another dive for his handkerchief.

It is not past belief, indeed, that had Edith made the glaring statement that in the existing state of things the men should have been willing to work for nothing, it would have met with no hesitant concurrence from Langdon.

Langdon was, in short, in that state of mind, or absence of mind, in which one is like to find himself who after years of abstin-

ence from feminine society essays the gentle art of making love. For love-making is, indeed, one of the fine arts; and to be an adept at it requires some apprenticeship. So far as women were concerned Langdon had been a man of the cloister. For if he had not, like the recluse of the monastery, guarded himself from the disturbance of feminine charms by the expedient of the downcast eye when passing a woman, he had, nevertheless, quite effectually excluded women from his life hitherto by the expulsive power of his ambition for self-advancement, and by his realization of the necessity thereto of husbanding the always slim resources of his exchequer. Like Æneas of old, who with the mission imposed upon him by the gods, of founding a great city upon the shores of Latium, tore himself away from the Carthaginian Dido who would detain him, so Langdon, strong in his ambition to carve out a career for himself, had thought it necessary to relieve himself of all feminine impedimenta. For had he not read and correctly translated from one of the standard classics how the women were kept in the rear of the army "with the rest of the baggage?"

But a man who has pursued such a policy of repression and abstinence will be at a great disadvantage when he comes finally to make his debut as a lover; and it should not be a matter for surprise if in this first entrance into Cupid's domain he does not score a very brilliant success.

This is not saying, however, that such a man may not sometimes be a very interesting person. Langdon certainly was to Edith. He was a new species of the genus *homo* in her experience. Accustomed as she was to adulation and flattery her admirers had always veiled or tempered their attentions by that fine *savoir faire* of polite society, the accomplishment of drawing-room habitués, of those to the manner born. But here was a man of extreme remove from such as these; a man who was evidently a stranger to drawing-rooms, nor schooled in their small hypocrisies that he could conceal all evidences of the tender passion that overmastered his hitherto virgin heart.

Edith would not have been a woman had not her vanity been somewhat flattered by this open tribute to her power. There was something delicious in the writhings of this strong man under his bonds.

But, if Langdon thus wore his heart upon his sleeve, Edith was not disposed, as many of her sisters would have been, to wantonly peck at it. She knew that behind this apparent tyro of the drawing-room was the man she had seen and heard in the court room and at the office: the man of character, of ability and of soul. And, like Bassanio before the caskets, she felt that here outward shows might be least themselves and that a leaden casket with its plain and unpromising exterior might hold treasured contents that the more promising caskets of gold and silver had often failed to disclose.

And this strong man disguised Edith was anxious to draw out. To do this she must find some means to place Mr. Langdon at his ease. Where should she find the key to the leaden casket?

Langdon himself furnished her with it.

The drawing-room piano—a magnificent parlor-grand, imposing with its upraised top—inspired Langdon to add to his share in the conversation—hitherto consisting largely of monosyllabic responses—by making an original observation.

"A beautiful piano," he said.

"Yes," assented Edith with an amused

smile. "Papa gave me that for a Christmas present. You don't wonder, now, that I think a great deal of him, do you?"

"No, indeed. But I have no doubt you have requited his kindness by playing for him," said Langdon, quite surprising himself with this apt rejoinder.

"Oh, yes. He is very fond of music, and loves to have me play for him."

"Your friends, too, I suppose, sometimes have the privilege of hearing you."

Edith laughed—a light, rippling little laugh—at the not very heavily veiled request and the refreshing ingenuousness of Langdon's disregard of the conventions of a first call. But he seemed to be thawing out a little, and perhaps a piece or two of music would accelerate the thawing-out process.

"Yes, my friends do sometimes hear me play," she said, "but I shouldn't dare say that they always consider it a privilege.

"I've been practicing one of Chopin's nocturnes," she added, "and if you'll promise not to be critical I'll try it." This last with an arch look at Langdon.

Langdon promised. And he was troubled with no doubts as to his ability to redeem this promise.

With a charming sprightliness Edith rose and went over to the piano.

"You'll have to come and help me get the top down, Mr. Langdon."

Langdon came forward with awkward hesitancy and took hold of the piano-top while Edith drew down the supporting rod. But the proximity to Edith in which this operation brought Langdon was disconcerting to him, and he let the top come down upon his hand.

"Oh, I hope you haven't hurt your hand, Mr. Langdon," Edith said sympathetically.

"Oh, not at all," said Langdon, belying his words by involuntarily thrusting his hand into his pocket.

Edith seated herself at the piano.

"Shall I turn the pages for you?" said Langdon.

"No, thank you," Edith replied with an amused smile. "I'm going to try this without my notes.

"But you needn't go so far away, Mr. Langdon," she said, as Langdon made to return to his former seat. "Sit down here," —indicating a chair near her. Langdon seated himself in the chair indicated.

Edith lightly ran over a bar or two of the music.

"Have you heard this, Mr. Langdon—Liszt's arrangement of Chopin's Twelfth Nocturne?"

Had Langdon heard it? No, he had not. Langdon lived at a boarding house, and some idea of the character of the music with which he was entertained there may be gained by knowledge of the fact that it was furnished by the landlady's daughter on the typical boarding-house piano of early vintage, and from a repertoire containing such musical gems as "Beautiful Snow," "The Maiden's Prayer," and "Only One Lock of Her Hair." Perhaps the *pièce de résistance* of her collection, however, and one well calculated to move to activity the lachrymal glands of the most stoical, was a vocal duet entitled "Oh Why Did They Dig Ma's Grave So Deep?" which, with the assistance of her younger sister (both singing in the same voice—a thin soprano), was given a very feeling rendition.

No; Langdon had not heard Chopin's Twelfth Nocturne. And when Edith gave an appreciative interpretation of this masterpiece of the great Polish composer, Langdon seemed to be lifted into a new and rarer atmosphere that drove his blood to a more

rapid coursing and fired his imagination to that pitch of exaltation and lofty aspiration which lies on the borderland of intoxication.

Chopin may well have laid the foundation for the romantic attachment which George Sand conceived for him by playing his Twelfth Nocturne to her. Edith's rendering of it certainly put the capstone upon Langdon's devotion, and she might have read in his face evidences of her double success as she turned toward him after finishing the piece. She doubtless did read something there besides an appreciation of her playing, for with just the slightest show of embarrassment she asked conventionally:

"Are you fond of music, Mr. Langdon?"

"I never heard any before, Miss Middleton."

"Oh, how complimentary you are, Mr. Langdon," said Edith with a pleased smile. "You really deserve another piece for that."

"Then in this case I sha'n't hesitate to claim my deserts," replied Langdon, with a quickness and boldness that showed the music was having a salutary effect upon him.

With a gracious compliance Edith again turned to the piano and played Schubert's melodic *Serenata,* and followed this with

the quaintly plaintive *Au Printemps* of Grieg.

Elisha Langdon had not had the benefit of a musical education, and he would probably have sat a rather indifferent listener at an orchestral rendering of, say, one of Brahms' elaborate symphonies. But he was not without music in himself, even to an appreciation of the great masters, when they spoke—as they did speak in the selections Edith had played—in a language he could understand.

The great poet was doubtless right in his characterization of the man who was not moved with concord of sweet sounds. But mark the words: *concord of sweet sounds.* Shall we be charged with affections dark as Erebus if we are not moved (pleasurably) with the discord of harsh sounds which characterizes so much of our so-called high class music? So long as music is diverted from its natural and legitimate province of lyric expression to a labored painting of human emotions in tone-colors; from an appeal to the ear with sweet melody to a challenge to our analytic faculties in discovering and following involved and elusive themes, there will always remain a large and respectable body of the musically unenlightened.

Fortunately for them, these benighted ones

will not be without a few formidable defenders and apologists. Was not Rubinstein—that colossal genius of the pianoforte—to the last a defiant enemy of the Wagnerian school? And has not that doughty iconoclast, Max Nordau, placed the great exponent of "problem music" among his degenerates?

At any rate, the significant fact remains, that one must be educated to an appreciation of much of the music that bears the hallmark of the classic; an appreciation that will be intellectual, not sensuous. And it is feared that even this appreciation must often be somewhat discounted by the hypocrisy that is frequently hidden behind the bravo and handclapping of the would-be musically elect.

There certainly was no hypocrisy in Langdon's expression of his appreciation of Edith's music. It was something more than the mere discharge of the conventional obligation of the drawing-room. It was the sincere utterance of a heart whose hunger—hitherto an unconscious hunger—had been fed with ambrosial manna.

And the music did have the effect of putting Langdon at his ease, as Edith had hoped. The oppressive self-consciousness that had

so clogged both his thoughts and his tongue, disappeared, and with the resources of a well-stored mind to draw from he had no difficulty in making his conversation interesting to Edith. Indeed, she soon contrived to let him do most of the talking. Encouraging him with sympathetic questions she led him to talk about himself: to tell of the privations of his early years, his struggles for an education, his college days, his novitiate at the bar, and of the many interesting incidents that fall out in the course of a young man piloting his own boat upon tempestuous waters and through rock-girt channels. Not unlike the fair Desdemona who with greedy ear devoured the discourse of the swarthy Moor, Edith listened to Langdon. And insensibly there began to form in her mind an ideal: a strong, resourceful man, a man of serious purpose, of high ideals, and of worthy ambitions; a man who should gain and hold her respect and homage by reason of his constant appeal to what was highest and best in herself, and under the protection of whose strength her own life should find its expression and fruition.

On what swift wings flies the time when a man and a maid, each inspirited by the

magnetism of the other's presence, hold delightful converse!

Langdon thought to look at his watch.

"A thousand pardons, Miss Middleton, for my thoughtlessness in staying so late," he said, as he hastily arose to go. "I sha'n't tell you what time it is, and I hope you won't look at the clock."

"Oh, I don't think I should be very badly frightened if I did know the time," Edith said, smiling, as she arose to accompany Langdon from the drawing-room into the hall. "It was rather late when you called for me, you must remember. You spent part of the evening with papa."

"True, I should be credited with the time I spent with your father. And I hope he will be as generous in allowing the credit as you have been."

"You need have no misgiving on that score, Mr. Langdon. Papa lets me keep all such personal accounts."

"That's another point in his favor. I see I shall have some very substantial credits to make in my ledger account with him."

"And you'll make them without being forced at the point of a sword?" said Edith, laughing.

"Yes," replied Langdon, joining in the laugh.

"I hope the hill won't deter you from calling again, Mr. Langdon, even when you haven't business with papa," Edith said as Langdon opened the front door to go.

"The hill? Why, Miss Middleton, I could climb mountains to pass another such pleasant evening."

"Oh, could you?" laughed Edith. "Well, then, as the hill is hardly a Matterhorn or a Jungfrau, I shall expect to see you again."

"It is not a Jungfrau—no," said Langdon, "although there is a *jung frau* at the top of it that should make the ascent of the hill easy."

"Oh, what an awful pun, Mr. Langdon! Really, I think I should withdraw my invitation for that."

"That would be too severe a punishment for my offense, Miss Middleton, atrocious as I must admit the offense was."

"Well," said Edith, "I'll devise a proper penalty and impose it when you come again."

"Be merciful, Miss Middleton."

Edith smiled reassuringly.

"Good-night!"

"Good-night!"

If, the next time he called, Langdon made the ascent of the hill with the space-annihilating gait that he now descended it, he would certainly have deserved a medal as a hill climber. The elation of his mind seemed to be communicated to his feet, for his long strides homeward were wonderful to behold —or, rather, would have been wonderful to behold had there been any one abroad at that time of night to see him. As he walked he occasionally bared his head to receive the grateful cooling of the night wind upon his brow, anon gazing upward at the star-studded sky and at the full round moon, now high advanced in the heavens.

All the world loves a lover? Aye, the whole universe holds him in its heart's core. Even now, as Langdon stood silent, gazing upward, thinking thoughts all too sweet for utterance, the bright, shining moon beamed down upon him approvingly, and even the stars seemed to be twinkling their felicitations!

CHAPTER XXIX

Mr. Middleton Treads the Wine-press

Mr. Middleton added somewhat to the monthly gas bill himself that night. Long after Edith had closed her account in that matter, her father continued adding to the debit side of his.

Had any one looked in upon Mr. Middleton, however, as he paced the floor from his bedroom to the adjacent study, he would readily have conjectured that something besides household expenses was absorbing his thoughts, making him quite oblivious of the remorseless registering of the gas meter in the basement.

In short, having closed with Langdon, Mr. Middleton was now having it out with himself. The generous impulses which the talk with Langdon had stirred within him, and which had prompted his words of encouragement to Langdon at the close of the interview, suffered some abatement when he came upstairs to his own room and began

coolly to reflect upon the import of the assurances he had given and upon the probable consequences of making them good.

To what had he given an implied, if not an express consent? To a compromise with the mill men. Was not this a thing that he had hitherto scouted and refused? Had he not denied it to the solicitation of his own son, to the overtures of the workmen's committee, and but lately to the suggestions of the court? Would not such a concession now look like a capitulation by the company to its workmen, turning their technical and insubstantial victory in court into a substantial one on the merits of the controversy? Mr. Middleton's pride rose in revolt against such an apparent back-down. There was no necessity for it. It would amount to a voluntary allowance of what the present business conditions did not compel the company to grant. Let the workmen strike. There would be no trouble in manning the mills; and any temporary losses would be more than made good by the less heavy drafts of the new pay-roll.

Yes—Mr. Hartland was right. The company held the best cards just now, and all that was necessary to do was simply to

"stand pat." They were bound to win out.

And yet—the gas went on burning in Mr. Middleton's room, and he continued pacing the floor. He could not rest satisfied with these conclusions of cold business logic. Factors hitherto virtually negligible disturbed their convincing finality. Strange as it may seem, into Mr. Middleton's business vocabulary were now intruding such exotics as "duty," "justice," and "moral obligation" —widening the horizon that bounded his relations with his employees beyond the circumscribed limits of the market-place, and giving a more complex character to the formula for business conduct than the simple one of two and two make four, and twice three is six.

Now, how does it happen that Mr. Middleton should be giving harbor to thoughts so variant from those habitual to him?

When Philip in his parting letter to the union suggested that his going away might help the men more than his remaining at home, he probably had in mind the emphasis such a course would give to his protest against the company's policy, rather than that it would have any great softening influence upon his father.

But Mr. Middleton's affection for his son was the one vulnerable point in his armor. And here he had been dealt an unhealable and torturing wound by Philip's sudden and unfilial departure from home. The punitive measures he had taken against Philip, recoiling as they did upon himself, only served to irritate this wound. His pride prevented him from withdrawing the prohibition he had placed upon the mention of Philip's name at home; but he would have been better pleased had this command been more honored in the breach than in the observance.

Denying himself these verbal reminders, he went out of his way to get others. Two or three times recently he had gone into the mills on rather slender pretexts, and each time his not very clearly defined purpose took him by the rolls where Philip's station had been. The sight of John Waters fell like a balm upon his lacerated feelings, and prompted a friendly nod to him as he passed by.

Just as little excuse had Mr. Middleton for his frequent visits to Philip's room at home as well as to his dressing-room in the office building. Numerous here were the things to awaken remembrance that the

former occupant had left behind him.

A more forcible and painful reminder came to him that very evening when, on alighting from his carriage and coming toward the house, he encountered Prince. Poor dog! There was no need to wonder whether or no he had remained faithful to the memory of his kind master. Of this his already gaunt body and moping demeanor gave unmistakable evidence. Mr. Middleton felt a clutch at his heart when, with a low whine, Prince looked up to him appealingly, with reproach, too, in his wistful eyes.

"Poor fellow! You miss him too, don't you," he said, as he stooped and gave him an affectionate stroke upon the head, drawn into close sympathy with the noble animal by the bond of a common suffering.

Thus it was, that Philip's going away had broken up the hard, unyielding soil of Mr. Middleton's heart. And the soil thus broken had been harrowed by the prods of memory and association, making it receptive to the seed of the new doctrine that Langdon had preached and Philip had exemplified.

So may be traced the genesis of the thoughts that were now arising in Mr. Middleton's mind to contend against the dictates of a

cold business policy and the leadings of unfeeling self-interest.

The new light that he now saw, though uncertainly lighting his future way, cast illuminating rays upon his past. In this better perspective the trend of his past life stood clearly revealed. Ever since the death of his first wife—ah! that parting of the ways in his life—that baptism of suffering from which he had arisen embittered and re ellious, and showing none of the chastening uses of sorrow—ever since then, he saw his life shaped and controlled by a single absorbing and sordid purpose—money-making. Sordid, because unrelieved by a recognition or consciousness of any ulterior purpose, and enlisting a devotion and concentration only matched and well exemplified by a green-table *habitué*. He saw how this absorbing pursuit after wealth, long settled into fixed habit, had so confined his thoughts and activities within the narrow groove of his business that his very personality had become swallowed up in it until his business became more than himself, its demands all-paramount and inexorable, and until, in his business relations, he had come to regard as unworthy of consideration all claims not having a

strict business sanction. The one great affection of his life, even—his love for his son—had not prevailed against the strength of his ruling passion. Of course, from a business point of view, Philip had been wrong, Mr. Middleton reflected. But this reflection could not obliterate the painful fact that his son was lost to him—irrevocably lost, he feared. For he now realized that his quarrel with Philip was not simply a dispute over the present situation at the mills, but represented the mortal conflict between two antagonistic ideas: the one, to which he had become so firmly wedded that, in the world of business, obligation was strictly limited to business necessity and business policy; the other, for which Philip stood, that in business no less than in other relations in life, the claims of generous fraternity—of universal brotherhood, should receive recognition.

It was the clashing of these two ideas that had precipitated the second great catastrophe of his life. It was not only his insistence upon his own views, but his total lack of appreciation of Philip's attitude, that had, by its very expulsive force, driven Philip from him. And thus, as the climax of a

seeming process of degeneracy, he had excluded from his life the one great influence that worked to rescue it from an utter worldliness.

Would Philip come back? Should he ever see him again? These were torturing questions to Mr. Middleton. And strange, now, as he leaned toward the making of a concession to the workmen and a peaceable solution of the mill problem, Philip seemed to be drawn nearer to him, as if an atmosphere had been generated congenial to Philip's spirit, and through the mysterious processes of telepathy it had spanned the distance that divided them to encourage him with its influence. On the other hand, this sense of Philip's nearness and influence appeared to leave him when his mind opened to the suggestions of Mr. Hartland and he allowed himself to fall under the baneful spell of that Worldly Wiseman and his sinister counsels.

These two influences—his good and his evil angel, seemingly—strove with Mr. Middleton for the mastery over him.

Moral struggles are the most severe of all struggles. They are the Gethsemanes of the soul, from which it emerges plumed

for loftier flights, or with wings clipped in the conflict to be depressed to a lower flight than before.

Letting his actions speak for him, we shall shortly see in what state of mind Mr. Middleton emerged from his long battle of the night.

CHAPTER XXX

A Quarrel between Partners, which, However, is Settled in a Very Businesslike Way

When a man looks forward in the morning to a piece of serious business that he must put through in the course of the day, it were well that he fortify himself with a good breakfast. The necessity or advisability of so doing would seem to be especially urgent where his customary hours of sleep have been encroached upon the night before.

Mr. Middleton omitted this precautionary expedient on the morning after his long night vigil, for his stay at the breakfast table was limited to the time required for a hasty bite or two of toast and a swallow of coffee.

He did, however, do the proper thing in connection with the particular piece of serious business that he had in contemplation, when he went right about it, making it the first thing in the order of business for the day.

Before going out to the mills he called at the Commercial Bank to see Mr. Hartland.

He arrived at the bank before banking hours, but not too early to find Mr. Hartland in his private office. That gentleman was already deeply immersed in a mass of papers that strewed his desk. From these he looked up as Mr. Middleton entered.

"Well, well!" he said, surprised to see who his caller was. "You're around early, Mr. Middleton. Has the strike been declared?"

"No—not yet," Mr. Middleton replied, as he seated himself. "And I hope we sha'n't have any strike."

"Oh, we'll have a strike all right," said Mr. Hartland, with a grim smile. "We may as well prepare for it. The men feel pretty good over the court's decision, I guess—think they've licked us, mebbe, and are lookin' for us to give in to 'em. They'll find out we've got 'em on the hip when they see how easily we'll fill their places when they walk out."

"It will be still easier for us, though, if we can keep the old men and not be compelled to fill their places at all," said Mr. Middleton, looking at Mr. Hartland narrowly.

"Oh, yes, of course. But they won't stay under the reduced scale."

"But they will stay if we raise the scale."

Mr. Hartland shot a quick, sharp look at Mr. Middleton.

"Yes, but I hope you're not thinking of doing that."

"Yes, I am," said Mr. Middleton in a tone of decision. "Mr. Langdon, the attorney for the men, called to see me last night, and we went over the matter pretty thoroughly. He assured me that the men would be reasonable in their demands if we were willing to concede something on our side."

"Oh, I don't question for a minute that the men are ready to be *reasonable*," said Mr. Hartland with sneering emphasis upon the last word. "But we don't have to make any concessions to them; and if we don't have to, it isn't business for us to do it."

"Well, perhaps it isn't strictly business," returned Mr. Middleton, "but after thinking the matter over I have come to the conclusion that it is the right thing to do."

Yes—Mr. Middleton used the word *right*. And he felt the strange sensation of having added an inch to his stature when he uttered it.

"The right thing!" Mr. Hartland almost hissed out as the prospect of lessening dividends loomed large before him. "I thought

we had finished with all that sort of nonsense when we got rid of that fool son of yours."

Now, if Mr. Middleton had composed his nerves—unsteadied by a sleepless night—with a good breakfast, he might have been able to receive Mr. Hartland's last remark in the business—if not Pickwickian—sense in which it was intended. As it was, he rose from his chair with a flushed face.

"When it comes to the matter of fool sons, Mr. Hartland, it isn't safe for you to throw any stones."

"Ho, ho!" Mr. Hartland laughed, not at all disturbed by Mr. Middleton's petulant insinuation. "Well, if my son should ever act as your son has acted, I shouldn't take offense at anybody's calling him a fool."

"Philip wasn't a fool!" Mr. Middleton cried, heatedly, and feeling now a strange joy in defending his son. "I thought he was at the time. But I see now that we were the fools." Here Mr. Middleton brought his clenched hand down hard upon Mr. Hartland's desk, and so close to his face as to make him draw back involuntarily. "We were fools to make such a heavy wage cut in the first place, and afterwards in not treating with the men in a conciliatory spirit. It

isn't too late yet to repair the mischief—a good deal of it, anyway"—Mr. Middleton felt a sudden pang over the possible irreparableness of a part of the mischief—"and I'm going to repair it if I can."

Mr. Hartland now rose, with face set to a menacing sternness.

"Look here, Mr. Middleton. As manager of the company, you've got no right to play fast and loose with the stockholders in this way. I won't stand for it; and I warn you now, that if you persist in this foolish and unbusinesslike course, there'll be a new president and manager of the company after the next meeting of the stockholders."

Mr. Middleton's face paled.

"What do you mean?" he said, and yet not without a sickening suspicion of the truth.

"I mean that you no longer control a majority of the stock, and that I do."

Mr. Middleton sank into a chair and looked at Mr. Hartland in the dazed way of a man who has been stunned by a blow.

It was true.

When he closed his deal with Philip for his stock, and Philip had left the bank, an idea occurred to Mr. Hartland which caused

him to countermand the instructions he had given to the cashier as to the registry of the transfers and to enjoin secrecy upon that complaisant officer touching the entire transaction.

As Mr. Hartland had surmised, Mr. Middleton had not been apprised of Philip's sale of his stock. Not finding any transfer upon the company's stock register he assumed that Philip still held the stock. And, quite aside from the bearing of this stock upon the control of the company, he had of late found some comfort in the thought of this still remaining bond that bound his son to him.

But upon the ownership of Philip's stock might now rest the control of the company. For, about a year previously, Mr. Middleton, in an unguarded moment, and without, of course, any thought of the subsequent events, had, to accommodate a friend who was looking for a profitable investment, parted with a portion of his stock, leaving himself, however—with the natural support of Philip's holdings—still with a majority of the stock behind him.

But Mr. Boynton (Mr. Middleton's transferee) feeling the stress of the times, had subsequently negotiated a loan at Mr. Hart-

land's bank, and pledged his mill stock to secure it. Within the past week his note had matured, and not being able to meet it, or (for obvious reasons) to get a renewal of it from Mr. Hartland, he had, to avoid a foreclosure sale of the stock, sold it to Mr. Hartland at the latter's not very extravagant valuation; although Mr. Hartland gave more for it than he would have paid had he not, likewise (but for a different reason) been anxious to avoid a foreclosure of the pledge, with the public sale of the stock as required by law.

Having in the meantime managed to pick up a few other needed shares, Mr. Hartland now held a majority of the stock, and, in consequence, the power of control of the mill company.

"Yes," he said, as he reseated himself, with an inward chuckle over the effect of his disclosure upon Mr. Middleton, "I've got Phil's stock and Boynton's stock, and a few more shares besides—enough to give me a majority, as you can figure out for yourself after I get these transfers registered. I didn't register them at the time"—Mr. Hartland smiled significantly—"for I didn't want to get into any race with you for control. I wanted

control so as to be in a position to protect my stock. I see now that I was wise in doing what I did, although I had no idea that you and I would ever get at serious loggerheads over a question of management."

Mr. Hartland here opened a drawer of his desk and drew forth a bundle of papers.

"Here are the stock certificates, if you would like to see them. I was going to have the transfers registered to-day."

Mr. Middleton took the papers, and hastily and mechanically ran through them, only stopping to let his eye rest for a moment with love-hungered intentness upon his son's well-known signature.

He tossed them back to Mr. Hartland, but said nothing.

"Of course, this needn't make any difference in the mill affairs," said Mr. Hartland, in an exasperating tone of reassurance. "I'm perfectly satisfied with your management of the business—have been, anyway, until now. Just drop this nonsense about raising the scale, and I'll be content to leave the management in your hands as heretofore."

Gall and wormwood!

Had it come to this? Control of the mill company that he had held from the time of

its organization wrested from him! And not now distributed among a number of stockholders, but centered in one man, and that man Mr. Hartland. A man for whom, in his now changed state of feeling, he felt a strange aversion, not unmixed with anger and resentment, as he realized that this man had been the means—working secretly—to rob him of control, to sever Philip's connection with the company, and to facilitate his departure from home.

Was he, then, who had heretofore conducted the company with a sense of proprietorship free from the dictation of a superior, and with a becoming pride in its growth and expansion—was he henceforth to take orders from another—from this man? to take his suggestions as to the mill management not simply as suggestions to abide his own discretion, but as mandates to be obeyed?

The thought of all this was intolerable to Mr. Middleton.

"A fine piece of work, this," he said sarcastically, as he rose from his chair and paced the floor. "A very fine piece of work. But you've made one serious miscalculation, I'm afraid, Mr. Hartland. There's one chicken—or shall I say goose—that you've

counted that won't hatch out. If you think that by getting control of the company you thereby get control of me you're very much mistaken. You can't move me around like a pawn on a chess-board. I've been in control of the company too long to play second fiddle in its management now."

"Oh, I'm not asking you to play second fiddle," said Mr. Hartland testily. "All I want is for you to recognize my rights as owner of a majority of the stock."

"Well, I think I know what that means," Mr. Middleton rejoined, and then, the state of his nerves rushing him into a precipitous expression of his feelings, he turned upon Mr. Hartland savagely:

"Look here, Hartland! The company isn't big enough to hold us both. One of us will have to get out. What do you want for your stock?"

"I don't care to sell," replied Mr. Hartland shortly.

"Then make me an offer for mine!" Mr. Middleton exclaimed, with a wild recklessness that exposed a broadside to Mr. Hartland's coolness and cunning.

Mr. Hartland reflected.

Here was a chance for a stupendous specu-

lation. In Mr. Middleton's present mood he could get his stock almost at his own figures. With him out of the way he would have full swing at the mills. He could take advantage of the impending strike to crush the union, get rid of the turbulent spirits among the men, maintain the reduced wage scale, and, with returning prosperous business conditions, reap the enormous profits that would ensue to him as the owner of virtually all the stock.

The prospect presented glittering possibilities to Mr. Hartland's covetous eyes. And the glitter of these possibilities blinded him to other contingencies of a more sombre hue.

As Mr. Hartland's business methods have already received sufficient exemplification in previous chapters, it will not be necessary to detail the tortuous tactics which he now adopted in bargaining with Mr. Middleton. Suffice it to say, that he closed with him for his stock, and in the course of that day and the next turned over to him an amount of cash, real estate and securities that, even at the exceedingly low valuation that was placed upon Mr. Middleton's holdings, left Mr. Hartland with the bulk of his fortune tied up in mill stock.

And so, in the sequence of events in this chronicle, it is to be related that Mr. Middleton, having disposed of his stock in the Ellerton Iron & Steel Works, resigned from the presidency and directorate of the company, and Mr. Hartland reigned in his stead.

CHAPTER XXXI

A Round Peg in a Square Hole

Great was the surprise in Ellerton over Mr. Middleton's retirement from the steel company with which he had been for years so closely identified. There was much conconjecture as to its cause, and more and livelier conjecture as to its probable effect upon the future fortunes of Ellerton's chief industry.

Its immediate effect was to dash the hopes of a settlement that had been raised by Langdon's conference with Mr. Middleton.

"I'm out of it now—you'll have to see Mr. Hartland," was Mr. Middleton's laconic greeting to Langdon, whom he met on the street the day after the transfer of his holdings to Mr. Hartland.

"I'm sorry that I can't give you any encouragement in that quarter," he added, with a meaning smile. "I guess it's up to the men now either to submit to the reduced scale or quit."

So it proved.

Langdon did see Mr. Hartland, but only to get an emphatic and unequivocal confirmation of Mr. Middleton's surmise.

In some chagrin over the failure of his negotiation, the success of which had seemed so promising, Langdon reported the situation to the strike committee.

The committee, under its authority from the union, straightway posted a notice calling out the men.

Fires were accordingly drawn in the mills, and the men walked out.

The strike was on.

And now Mr. Hartland had an opportunity to show his ability as a mill manager.

In assuming the presidency of the steel company he assumed also its active management. Mr. Cosgrove was, it is true, advanced to the position of general manager; but no one more than that gentleman himself realized the purely nominal character of the position, and that his duties therein would be wholly ministerial.

Mr. Hartland, in short, now dominated the steel company in like manner as he did the Commercial Bank, and divided his time between the bank and the mills.

As the company had no very pressing

contracts on hand, he determined to let the mills remain shut down for a couple of weeks before attempting to man them with a new force.

This, Mr. Hartland considered to be a shrewd move, and he chuckled to himself over the saving it effected in the outlay for operating expenses.

Well, there are many men who act on the theory that every retrenchment is a gain; men whose penny-wiseness and pound-foolishness impel them to save where they should spend; who have eyes and ears for the trickling spigot, but not for the gurgling escape at the bung-hole. Your bucolic statesman, for example, has frequently no higher conception of his duty to his constituents than that of swishing the legislative pruning-hook through appropriations and salary lists. Nor has the aforesaid statesman any more courteous designation for an enactment increasing official emolument than that of "Salary Grab." But soft, now! He may be partly right. In a blind sort of way he may be stumbling upon a truth that has long been suspected in much more intelligent and discriminating quarters, viz., that the average legislator—which would, perhaps, be inclusive of our

bucolic friend himself—is, on the rigid basis of a *quid pro quo*, but a biennial pensioner upon the bounty of the State.

Nevertheless, let the proverb stand: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

We have, too, the profane proverb that whom the gods would destroy they first make mad.

If Mr. Hartland, in his actions thus far, betrayed some signs of that mental aberration which goes before destruction, his next important step certainly stopped little short of rank lunacy.

He let Superintendent Mitchell go!

When it is remembered what manner of man Mitchell was—his thorough knowledge of the iron business in general, and of the business of the Ellerton mills in particular—it would seem as if he should have been the man, of all others connected with the mills, that Mr. Hartland, with so much at stake, would grapple to himself with hoops of steel. But no; Mitchell had too high an opinion of the value of his services. At least so Mr. Hartland thought. In the face of a general reduction in wages and salaries Mitchell had

the hardihood and obstinacy to insist on a renewal of his annual contract, then expiring, at the same salary he had been receiving, thinking he had made a sufficient concession to the depressed business conditions when he waived the usual increase that had theretofore been awarded to him on the renewal of his contract.

But Mr. Hartland, having in view a competent man—as he thought—to take Mitchell's place, held out for a considerable reduction in his salary.

"Oh, I don't doubt ye can get a man to take me place," said Mitchell, when Mr. Hartland suggested this to him; "an' mebbe he'll be able to fill me place, an' mebbe he won't. Annyways, as ye don't seem to moind tryin' a new man, I guess I'll let yez."

And he did.

There were others, however, who were more appreciative of the value of Mitchell's services. Prominent among these was Mr. Middleton. And it was largely through his strong backing that Mitchell shortly afterwards left Ellerton to assume a responsible position in a Pittsburgh mill.

The man Mr. Hartland selected to succeed Mitchell as mill superintendent was a certain

Mr. Billings, one of the many composing the flotsam and jetsam of industrial wreckage elsewhere that had during the past month or two drifted into Ellerton.

To arrive at a true estimate of Mr. Billings a considerable discount would have to be made from that gentleman's own rather extravagant estimate of himself. But it is only fair to state that he was, in truth, a man of some parts, and had had a quite varied and extended experience in the rolling-mill business. Indeed, in view of his undoubted ability and experience the wonder might well arise why he had not succeeded in making better provision for himself than he appeared to have done; why his mill knowledge, skill and experience should not have served to settle him in a position of some permanence rather than leave him to an uncertain and precarious itinerancy.

One given to physiognomic reading and to basing much thereupon would probably have traced some connection between Billings's infirm clutch upon worldly position and the red, bulbous nose that formed the most distinguishing feature of his face.

In spite of his rather unprepossessing appearance, however, Mr. Billings succeeded

in convincing Mr. Hartland that he was the man for Mitchell's place. Not without considerable weight, doubtless, in bringing Mr. Hartland to this conclusion was the fact that he secured Billings's services at about one half the salary Mitchell had been receiving.

Over this considerable saving Mr. Hartland indulged in another quiet chuckle to himself.

With the assistance of this worthy lieutenant, Mr. Hartland proceeded to re-man the mills. As he had surmised, this was not at all a difficult thing to do. Besides the multitude of new men that had poured into Ellerton in anticipation of the strike, and who were clamorous for employment—many of them, too, not without some mill experience—there were not a few of the old men who, chilled by the nipping frost of the first pay-day passed without pay, and with whom the prospect of work and pay proved more alluring than the seemingly barren one of loyalty to the union, threw away their union buttons and applied for reinstatement. They were compelled to give up all union affiliations; for the mill, as Mr. Hartland impressed upon Mr. Billings, was thenceforth to be a non-union mill, and any attempt at organizing a union among the mill employees in

the future was to be followed by the immediate discharge of those engaged in it.

With a complement of mill hands secured, the company now resumed operations in all departments. Considerable work had accumulated during the shut-down, requiring the working of the mills to their full capacity. So that now all was rush and bustle about the mills; and as Mr. Hartland on his daily trips out to the mills beheld their fire-and-smoke-belching chimneys, and his ears were assailed by the continuous din into which their manifold clangors were merged, he had dreams of enormous wealth, and gave himself many a metaphoric slap on the back over his great shrewdness and foresight in getting control of the company and possessing himself of the bulk of its stock.

It was not long, however, that he was left to these pleasant dreams undisturbed. The belching chimneys and clangorous din of the mills were as little indicative of their industrial soundness as the hectic flush of the fever patient is of returning health.

Reversing all precedent, the new brooms in the mills were not sweeping very clean. Especially was this true with the rollers, heaters and puddlers, whose work required

for its proper doing more than ordinary skill and experience. Only a few of the new men possessed this necessary skill and experience; and the result was that there was much waste of time and material, and much that was unsatisfactory in the completed product that was shipped out.

It was with a long face that Billings reported this condition of things to Mr. Hartland, and impressed upon him the urgent necessity of getting a considerable number of skilled men for the more important positions in the mills. Could not the strike be in some way broken, he suggested, so that they could take their pick from among the old men? Or was it not possible that the needed workmen of experience could by proper (he meant improper, of course,) inducements be influenced to come back to work in spite of their union pledges?

Mr. Hartland would see what could be done. Encouraging Billings to use his best efforts with his present material, he cast about for the means to effectuate his suggestions, without, of course, any thought of adopting the simple and most natural one of treating with the union.

Men with whom the wiles of cunning and

intrigue have become habitual, whose feet have long walked the ways that are indirect and sinuous, come in time, seemingly, to lose all sense of directness. They will inevitably, in seeking their ends, turn to the most tortuous courses, although to the ordinary eye the way lies straight and clear. Beyond doubt, they do often display remarkable acumen in laying out and following their covert and labyrinthine processes. Nor are they less shrewd, perhaps, in the selection of their human tools for furthering their ends. By a kind of instinct they seem to fall upon the men who can be most useful to them.

In this last matter, however, it is sometimes hard to tell upon which side the selective or attractive force is the more powerfully exercised; whether the magnet draws the iron, or the reverse. At any rate, like attracts like. They come together.

Without stopping to determine the relatively unimportant matter as to whether Mr. Hartland or Mr. Isaac Battles, the business agent of the union, made the first advances, let it be stated that shortly after Billings's report on the unfavorable conditions in the mills, Mr. Hartland and Mr. Battles were closeted together in secret con-

ference. After this conference—and so soon thereafter as to raise a most plausible presumption that it was in consequence of it—we find Mr. Battles in the most discouraging state of mind as to the ultimate success of the strike, and with a corresponding decidedly affirmative leaning on the wisdom of declaring it off. So strong, indeed, were his convictions on the subject, and so necessary to the welfare of the men did he deem the adoption of his views to be, that he did not selfishly keep these views to himself, but with commendable zeal and much protestation of disinterestedness he industriously disseminated them among the workmen, and also stood a public sponsor for them in an extended speech to the union at one of its meetings.

To bring about this sudden change of front on the part of one who had before been so blatant in his pro-strike attitude, Mr. Hartland must surely have displayed a more than ordinary power of argument and persuasiveness. But before giving him credit for this, however, some consideration should be given to a more plausible hypothesis. Considering the manner of man that Mr. Hartland was, and likewise the manner of

man with whom he was dealing, it is not at all unlikely that instead of depending upon cold argumentative processes, Mr. Hartland fell back upon the well recognized truth that "Money talks"; and so, in place of canvassing with Mr. Battles the broad situation of labor supply and demand, wages, markets, and other economic propositions, he reduced the conference—with the entire acquiescence of Mr. Battles himself—to the simple gist of what he was to give and Mr. Battles was to do.

At any rate, Mr. Battles's present attitude created a very strong suspicion among the men that he had been bought, and through the close espionage that was now put upon his goings out and comings in, which disclosed repeated conferences with Mr. Hartland and still more pronounced efforts to draw various of the skilled men away from their union allegiance, suspicion of his venality was raised to absolute certainty.

When, therefore, at the next meeting of the union, Mr. Battles again spoke in favor of an abandonment of the strike, he was repeatedly interrupted by derisive catcalls from various parts of the hall, as well as by a number of very embarrassing questions

that were hurled at him, causing him finally to sit down in considerable confusion. It remained for Aaron Gilks, however, to voice the general feeling in the matter. Narrow and fanatical though Gilks was, he was, beyond question, incorruptible—he could not be bought. Nor had he palliation or excuse for the vice of venality in others. Convinced of Battles's treachery, he did not allow his previous close association with him to trammel the free expression of the opinion he now held of him.

Had there been any doubt about Battles's double-dealing, it must have been removed by the abject look of self-confessed guilt with which, without waiting to defend himself, he slunk out of the room under the merciless scourge of Gilks's invective.

This narrative will not concern itself with the fortunes of Mr. Isaac H. Battles further than to state that he made a between-two-days disappearance from Ellerton. If credence is to be given to a persistent rumor at the time, this sudden departure was not wholly voluntary; but that late in the night he had been inveigled from his house by a number of the strikers who had constituted themselves a committee of *vigilantes*, taken

to the outskirts of the city and there, after suffering a quick metamorphosis into the similitude of a feathered biped, was let go, with the warning that worse would befall him if he ever appeared in Ellerton again.

Certain it is that Mr. Battles never came back. He closed up his affairs in Ellerton by proxy, leaving naught behind him except (and this he could not take away) an unsavory memory.

It is quite probable, however, that Mr. Battles found a market for his peculiar talents elsewhere. Such a thing will not appear improbable until such time as there shall be a dearth of venal business agents—walking delegates—who find unionism a fruitful field for selfish exploitation; whose rule of action is one of very simple terms: their pockets first, last and all the time; and with whom strikes are times of harvest, to be fomented rather than prevented, that in the ensuing wreckage they may gather the greater spoil.

Deprived of the valuable services of Mr. Battles in his efforts to get needed help from among the strikers, Mr. Hartland was fain to make shift with his present mill force. For with the exceptions already noted, and

these not among the skilled men, the strikers stood firm.

A man like Mitchell might have succeeded in welding the conglomerate labor material in the mills into a homogeneous and effective working force. But such a thing appeared to be quite beyond the capacity of Mr. Billings. The latter might, indeed, have made better progress in this direction had he not from time to time given way to that lamentable human weakness which had set its unmistakable seal upon his face. His bibulous propensity not only interfered with his own work of supervision (there were days when he failed to put in an appearance at the mills at all), but, tyrannical with the workmen when under the influence of liquor, he forfeited that respect and good-will on their part which is all-essential to thorough discipline.

Mr. Hartland had other troubles besides a disorganized labor force. News of the change of management, the strike and the shutdown, had gone abroad in the business world, and, in the immediate circle of the company's business connections, had wrought a feeling of uneasiness and want of confidence. This was shown in a marked falling off in orders,

and in an urgent pressing of the company on its bills payable. Moreover, business conditions generally, instead of improving, grew worse and worse. Quite frequently in place of checks and drafts in payment of bills receivable, the company received notices from assignees and receivers to file its claim in insolvency proceedings.

As time went on, with no lessening, but with aggravation, rather, of the adverse conditions under which the company was laboring, it became apparent to Mr. Hartland that it would soon not be simply a question of paying dividends, but the far more serious one of meeting operating expenses.

What was to be done?

Not this, certainly, that Mr. Hartland did do. Yet, in what he did he was not strikingly original. In using the funds of his bank to sustain the tottering fortunes of the mill company he but moved in the steps of many other enterprising and not altogether scrupulous bankers, who, finding the regular and conservative banking processes too slow for their aspiring financial genius, use their banks as bases of supply for all kinds of speculative and hazardous enterprises.

Sometimes they are successful. Mr. Hart-

land confidently expected to be. In supplying the company's necessities with the bank's money he thought to bridge the period of business depression for the mill company without any eventual crippling of the bank's resources.

He might have succeeded had not his calculations been sadly upset by an entirely unlooked-for event; an event, indeed, so paralyzing and destructive in its immediate effects, and so disastrous in its ultimate consequences, as to bring down Mr. Hartland's whole financial fabric like a house of cards.

CHAPTER XXXII

The Meeting in the Park, and what Followed

Nature provides her own correctives. Seldom are they pleasant; always effective. See, now: The sky may be clear blue from horizon to zenith, unflecked by cloud or bird. Drag a carcass into the field. You shall wait but a few minutes ere your eye, if it be keen, will descry, far off and up in the limitless blue, the tiniest speck of black. As you hold your eye upon this speck you see it wax upon your sight. Onward, and ever nearer it comes, moving with a swift, inevitable and ominous directness. As your eye now sweeps the heavens, you see the blue sky dappled with spots of black. These, too, enlarge as you gaze, and move with a like steady and certain directness toward a common center. Not long are you left to guess what they are. For now the vanguard is overhead. In sweeping, concentric and ever lowering circles, with flapping wings and raucous cry, down, down they come

and fall upon the carcass in the field. Down, and down again come others, until the noisome carrion is covered by their black and sinister forms.

The ravenous scavengers of the air—the carrion vultures! Yes, and how they peck and pull and tear, and gorge themselves, until, swollen with greedy fullness, they topple over under their own gluttonous weight. But the carcass is picked to the bones, and naught is left of it to putrefy and to poison the air.

Human vultures there are also that perhaps have their place and purpose in the social economy. They flock about the social plague spots, the centers of disorder and of industrial disturbance, and ghoulishly batten upon their baleful putridities.

Many of these human vultures flocked into Ellerton upon news of the strike. Search for work was their excuse for coming, the pretext under which their real and predatory purposes were concealed. They looked to the disorder, confusion and license which labor strikes always entail, to cloak their lawlessness, and to the striking mill men to be their convenient scapegoats.

The strikers themselves were not altogether

blameless in their deportment. There may have been, in the history of labor troubles, such a thing as a peaceful strike. But if so, it has failed of sufficient publicity to make such a designation seem other than a contradiction in terms. A large body of workmen smarting under a sense of injustice, and emboldened and inspirited by their own numbers, are not likely to rest in passive acquiescence when their places of employment are usurped by others. Nor is it surprising that among them should be found some incapable of restraining their inflamed passions from violent outlet.

The Ellerton strike presented the usual incidents of belligerency on the part of the strikers. Pickets were kept posted in the vicinity of the mills, whose duty it was to "labor" with the new workmen to induce them to quit work and ally themselves with the union. Not always was this duty performed in a come-let-us-reason-together spirit. Intimidation, threats and opprobrious epithets often took the place of argument, and, in those cases where fierce resentment on the one side was matched by truculence on the other, heated altercations not infrequently ended in fistic encounters, which, while perhaps

determining the relative physical prowess of the contending parties, were ill adapted to bringing them into more amicable relations.

It was against the old workmen, however, who had renounced their union allegiance and returned to work, that the animosity of the strikers was the most fiercely directed. "Traitors," "scabs," and even worse names than these, greeted them in going to and coming from work, or when they ventured abroad upon the streets after working hours. Several were brutally assaulted. A number, under pressure of the persistent persecution, finally left the city to seek work elsewhere, and those who remained sought to avoid such persecution by taking roundabout ways to and from work and keeping closely at home when not working.

As time passed, and the prospect of the strikers winning their fight grew more and more remote, they became more aggressive and persistent in their interference with and persecution of the mill workers. Not even the injunctional order against such interference, which the company obtained upon petition to the court, deterred some of the boldest and most venturesome spirits among

them. Arrested and convicted of contempt of court, they went to jail glorying in their supposed martyrdom.

But persecution of the mill workers was not all that the strikers were held responsible for. The thefts, robberies, assaults, burglaries, incendiarisms, and other acts of lawlessness, now almost of daily and nightly occurrence, and which were largely, if not wholly, the work of the lawless, criminal element—the human vultures—that infested the city, were all laid at the door of the strikers, and turned public sentiment against them.

Strenuous measures were now taken by the city and county authorities to check this lawlessness and restore order. The sheriff took upon himself the heaviest burden of responsibility. Hastily swearing in and arming a large number of special deputies, he distributed them in various parts of the city, and at the particular instance of Mr. Hartland detailed a squad of them to duty in the vicinity of the mills.

In defiance of police and deputies, however, the strikers continued their work of "laboring" with the mill workmen. In protecting the latter from interference the duputy sher-

iffs, naturally enough, aroused the animosity of the strikers, especially by the numerous arrests they made. Physical as well as wordy encounters became frequent. The tension of feeling increased. Finally came the climax, when the deputies, escorting a number of workmen from the mills, encountered several dozen of the strikers. Halting, they commanded the strikers to disperse. Jeers and gibes and menacing gestures greeted the command. The deputies opened fire, firing —as they later testified—over the heads of the strikers. Whether from accident due to careless handling of weapons, or from vindictive intent on the part of some of the deputies, two of the strikers dropped to their death.

Great was the excitement that this tragic event aroused in the city, especially among the strikers. The same night, Aaron Gilks and a half dozen others of the most intrepid spirits among the strikers held a secret meeting. As a result of this meeting the following handbill was the next day widely circulated and posted in various parts of the city:

The Meeting in the Park

UNION WORKERS!

TAKE NOTICE!

THERE WILL BE A

GREAT MASS MEETING!!

To-night, at 8 o'clock, at

Hayden's Park,

To denounce the atrocious murder of two of our brothers yesterday. *Come prepared to protect yourselves!*

Committee.

HAYDEN'S PARK was an enclosure of some half-dozen acres on the outskirts of the town. It could have been called a park only by courtesy, for it showed nothing of the landscape gardener's art, nor any eye-delighting touches of nature's beautifying hand. A number of straggling scrub-oak trees afforded a meager shade to picnickers in which to spread their luncheons. Here and there were large patches of ground that were hard and bare from much romping of children. There were a number of amusement devices: swings,

hanging rings, and parallel and horizontal bars. Upon the latter boys were wont to vie with one another over those venturesome feats, "chinning the pole," "little drop" and "big drop," and "skinning the cat." Occasionally they would gladly give way to an experienced turner, and stand in open-mouthed admiration and wonder while he went through a set of bewildering gyrations, turnings and giant-swings that were well fitted to leave upon the reflective mind a strong impression of a simian ancestry.

There was also a dancing-platform, which at picnic parties never lacked its capering feet to keep a hap-hazard time to the indifferent music.

Flanking one side of the park was that usual abomination and barbarism in parks—a menagerie, with its varied collection of animals cooped up in small box cages and diffusing the acrid and pestilential atmosphere of captivity. Back and forth they paced in their narrow prisons, looking out appealingly upon the gaping and unpitying crowd, and impressing upon the receptive minds of the children who gazed curiously at them a lesson of cruelty which they would not be slow to apply.

The Meeting in the Park

In the center of the park stood a band-stand, where on special occasions such as Memorial Day and the Fourth of July the local brass band rendered ear-piercing airs, and wordy orators bellowed forth their patriotic platitudes.

Around this band-stand a huge crowd gathered for the announced meeting. The strikers came in full force, as did the other unemployed in the city. Many came impelled by curiosity and that human craving for excitement which such an occasion was likely to gratify.

Of course, the disreputable and criminal element was fully represented, and showed itself in the evil-looking faces that here and there leered from the crowd.

The promoters of the meeting had evidently not consulted the almanac. Had they done so they would have noted the forecast of a moonlight night, and so might have dispensed with the smoking, wind-flaring, gasoline torches that were fastened against the railing on both sides of the stand.

Upon the outskirts of the crowd a number of special deputy sheriffs and blue-coated policemen paced back and forth, directing their attention not so much to the men in

the crowd as to the men on the platform. Here were seated Aaron Gilks and his half-dozen companions of the secret meeting of the night before. There, too, sat John Waters, with sad and troubled face. One of the handbills had been left at his house during the day, and in the hope of saying or doing something to prevent the trouble that was evidently brewing he had with some misgivings gone to the park, and, under solicitation, had taken a seat on the platform.

On the stand sat also Tom Tenwick. Tom, however, had taken a seat there entirely of his own motion, without solicitation. He had spent the afternoon in distributing the large bundle of handbills Gilks had given him, and by reason of that fact, doubtless, felt quite justified in assuming a position of prominence at the meeting. Tom had the most vague notion of what the meeting had been called for, and as little apprehension of the real gravity of the situation. Nevertheless, in his long frock coat and with a new and formidable necktie that had worked its way well up on his collar, he sat with a stiff uprightness and looked out upon the crowd with the dignified seriousness fitting the prominence of his position.

Next to Aaron Gilks sat a short, thick-set, bushy-whiskered man whose personal appearance would have been considerably improved by the attention of a hair-dresser. But Hermann Schultz—this was the man's name—had as little use for hair-dressers as he had for current social and political opinion. He was a socialist of a very pronounced type—an anarchist, many called him; an appellation he in no wise resented, and for which his social and political views afforded sufficient excuse. Of German birth and rearing, he had early become indoctrinated with the pessimism of German socialism. This pessimism had been nowise softened by added years nor by his transplantation to American soil. Rather had it been strengthened and confirmed; in great measure, doubtless, by the vicissitudes and hardships he had undergone. He provided a somewhat precarious support for a large family by job printing and from the meager avails of a bi-weekly issue of four pages called "The Worker," which had a limited circulation among the working people.

It was at Schultz's shop that the hand-bills announcing the park meeting had been printed, and it was Schultz himself that Gilks

had made haste to secure for the principal speech of the evening.

He was quite the man for the occasion. When the meeting was called to order and he was introduced, he plunged at once into one of his most vitriolic harangues. He denounced the police and special deputies as hired murderers, capitalistic bloodhounds, who should be made to feel the scorpion lash of outraged labor. The voice of their brothers' blood cried out to them from the ground for vengeance! Would they heed it, or would they stand like stocks and stones and see more of their number shot down like dogs by these cowardly assassins of the law? What had these men done that they should deserve death? They had only been trying to get back what they had been robbed of. The mistake they made was in going unarmed. If laborers, the producers of the world's wealth, would emancipate themselves from the heartless wage-slavery that was crushing them they must take the law into their own hands. Under the existing state of society the law was but machinery for the protection of capital and the oppression of labor. It protected the laborer only so long as he was willing to work for starvation wages, but

when he rebelled against the capitalistic extortion that was reducing him to the level of a serf, it marshalled its minions, the police and deputy sheriffs, to ruthlessly shoot him down. In the eyes of the law and its officers property was a more sacred thing than life. The right of property had been exalted into a kind of Divine right. Instead of the Divine right of *Kings*, there was now the Divine right of *Things*.

"Down with this infernal fetish, the Right of Property!" Schultz cried savagely as he paced back and forth upon the platform, gesticulating wildly. "The institution of private property is the cause of all the inequalities of society, its classes, its unjust privileges, and all the want and misery of the world. It enables the holders of property to live upon the labor product of the propertyless, and supports a horde of parasitic middlemen, profitmongers and financial thimble-riggers who live by fleecing the people and who accumulate millions at the expense of those who toil. This iniquitous institution —this grand conspiracy against the workers of the world—is maintained and upheld by law, and behind the law stands the government soldiery. If workingmen would achieve

their liberation from this economic bondage they must meet force with force. Every worker should provide himself with a revolver and a rifle—yes, and learn how to make and use dynamite! Peaceful methods are useless. The capitalistic brigands who are waxing fat upon the substance of the people will be deaf as adders to all argument, words and peaceful appeals. The gun and dynamite are the only arguments they will understand, and the only ones that will be effective against them."

For upwards of an hour Schultz held forth in this bitter strain of invective and abuse, the great crowd showing its appreciation by frequent and unrestrained applause, which was redoubled and long continued when he sat down.

Three of the strike leaders who were seated on the platform followed Schultz, in turn, and were equally bitter in their denunciation of the killing of the two strikers. They directed their attention particularly, however, to the "scabs" who had taken the places of the union men in the mills. Upon these "cowardly receivers of stolen goods" they rained down their vituperation and abuse, and asked if the time had not come

to use other and more effectual measures against them than mere words and entreaties.

John Waters had sat an unwilling and grieved listener during Schultz's harangue, and more so under the hot-headed ranting of those who followed him, for he saw the unmistakable drift that was setting towards violence. Willingly would he have left the platform and the meeting, but a compelling sense of a duty that he must perform chained him to his seat. He felt that a voice must be raised against the suicidal madness that was taking possession of both speakers and hearers. That voice, evidently, must be his own.

Reluctantly, yet determinedly, he arose of his own motion, and faced the noisy and turbulent crowd that was still shouting and gesticulating its approval of the inflammatory tirade of the fourth speaker, who had just taken his seat.

Waters pleaded earnestly for peace and observance of the law. He in no way palliated the killing of the two union men. If this was intentionally done, he said, it was a crime that should not go unpunished. Whatever censure their actions may have merited the men surely were not deserving

of death. Every effort should be made to discover who did the killing and to bring the guilty parties to justice. But it was for the law and the courts to mete out this justice, not for the strikers themselves. If they took the law into their own hands how much better would they be than the men who fired the fatal shots? Might not their blows miss the guilty and fall upon the innocent, or even upon the guilty without a reckoning of the degree of their guilt?

Just as earnestly did Waters plead against visiting violence upon the men working in the mills. How could the strikers help themselves by doing this? They should look the facts squarely in the face. The strike was a failure. He had feared in the beginning that it would be, and had therefore opposed the declaring of it. They must make the best of a bad situation. But whatever they did, let not their hands be stained with blood. Let not the cause of unionism suffer by the imputation of crime.

That angry, turbulent crowd, however, was in no mood for conciliatory counsels, and Waters's words fell upon deaf ears. He felt this while he was speaking, and became fully convinced of it when he finished,

and heard the hisses, jeers and angry exclamations that greeted the conclusion of his speech. Sick at heart, and with the oppressive sense of impending disaster, he sorrowfully left the platform and the meeting. Tom Tenwick went with him. As they passed out at the gateway of the park they looked back and saw that Aaron Gilks was now speaking, and they heard the yells and cheers of the crowd that, beyond doubt, were in approval of the speaker's words.

Gilks had been loudly called for. It was generally suspected among those who knew him that he had been the principal promoter of the meeting, and there was a natural expectation, therefore, that he would have something to say that would be worth hearing; something more suited to the temper of the crowd, certainly, than that to which they had just been listening.

Gilks did not disappoint this expectation. His very appearance as he rose and faced the shouting and cheering throng, bespoke a message of war rather than of peace. His eyes were bloodshot, and his bushy hair—never quite amenable to comb and brush—showed an unusual state of disarrangement. There was a several days' growth of beard

upon his face. A coarse woolen shirt, unbuttoned at the throat, revealed a masculine hirsuteness of breast that blended fittingly with the general unkemptness of his looks.

Gilks's speech was quite in keeping with his appearance. The realization that the strike, which he had done so much to promote, was thus far a complete failure, had evidently made Gilks desperate. For all restraint was thrown to the winds, and rankling hate and reckless fanaticism were given unbridled tongue.

Waters and his policy of peace came in for an unmerciful scoring.

"Law and order? To hell with law and order!" Gilks shouted, with a great sweep of his doubled fist. "We've had enough of that twaddle. Law and order hasn't helped us, and won't help us. I tell you, men, it's about time for us to raise the red flag of lawlessness and of *dis*order!"

A great cheer came from the crowd.

"There are times when men and people have got to take the law into their own hands —to put themselves above the law—and when it is right to do it. There has been plenty of lawlessness in the history of the world that we now look back to as heroic and

praiseworthy.

"Was it law and order when those make-believe redskins threw the tea overboard in Boston harbor? Hardly. And yet, we call them the Revolutionary patriots. Was John Brown law-abiding when he attacked the arsenal at Harpers Ferry in his attempt to free the slaves? They wouldn't have hung him if he had been. And yet, the colored people look upon John Brown as their John the Baptist, the forerunner of their saviour Lincoln. What was the French Revolution but a perfect orgy of disorder, of defiance of law? To the rich, self-satisfied and snobbish aristocrats of the time, the revolutionists were nothing but outlaws—fit food for the guillotine. But the historian of that period shows us only a people—the common people, rising up in their might and majesty, and throwing off the yoke of tyranny and oppression that had galled their necks for centuries.

"Different times bring different conditions. To-day we have the situation where the monied men of the country, having obtained control of both the capital and the means of production, are grinding the face of labor, and saddling it with a yoke as galling as ever were the chains of slavery.

"And shall we talk and listen to talk of law and order? That's the talk of our oppressors. Shall we parrot their fine phrases —play their game? The law is their friend. It protects them in their tyrannous courses. It is our enemy, and holds us in our slavery. We've got to throttle the law—strangle it—kill it, if we would be free!"

Again, as repeatedly throughout his speech, Gilks was cheered to the echo.

His manner, as well as the matter of his speech, was of a character to inflame the passions of the crowd. As he paced the platform, punctuating his scathing and vituperative denunciations with wildly swinging arms and stamping feet—at times jumping into the air and coming down with an impact that fairly shook the stand and threatened its security—he hardly seemed human, but rather like some enraged wild beast chafing under its restraining chain, eager to be unleashed, to fall mercilessly upon the object of its rage.

Gilks's madness, however, was not without a certain method. In getting up the meeting he had an ulterior motive beyond the public voicing of indignation over the killing of the two strikers. He saw that the strike must

ultimately fail unless the strikers made a bold master-move to strike terror among the non-union men who now manned the mills. And this, as was determined upon by him and his fellow conspirators at their secret meeting the night before, was to be nothing less than a night attack on the mills, to expel the night force.

The place selected for the mass meeting was a convenient one for setting the contemplated enterprise on foot, for the park was on the way toward the mills, and had them in full and unobstructed view.

The riotous frenzy to which Gilks had brought the crowd he now turned against the non-union workmen.

"We are told that the strike is a failure. Why is it a failure? It's because we've been too easy with the rascally scabs that are holding down our jobs. Why do we let them do it? Are we cravens and cowards? Why do we let that flaming smoke pouring from those chimneys (Gilks pointed with menacing finger toward the mills) continue to insult us? If we are brave men and not cowards—if we have any spark of manhood left in us—we will say now, and say it finally, that those mills shall be run by union men

or they sha'n't be run at all!"

A great shout of approval came from the crowd.

"Let's drive off the d——d scabs!" cried a voice.

The cry was taken up by a score of others.

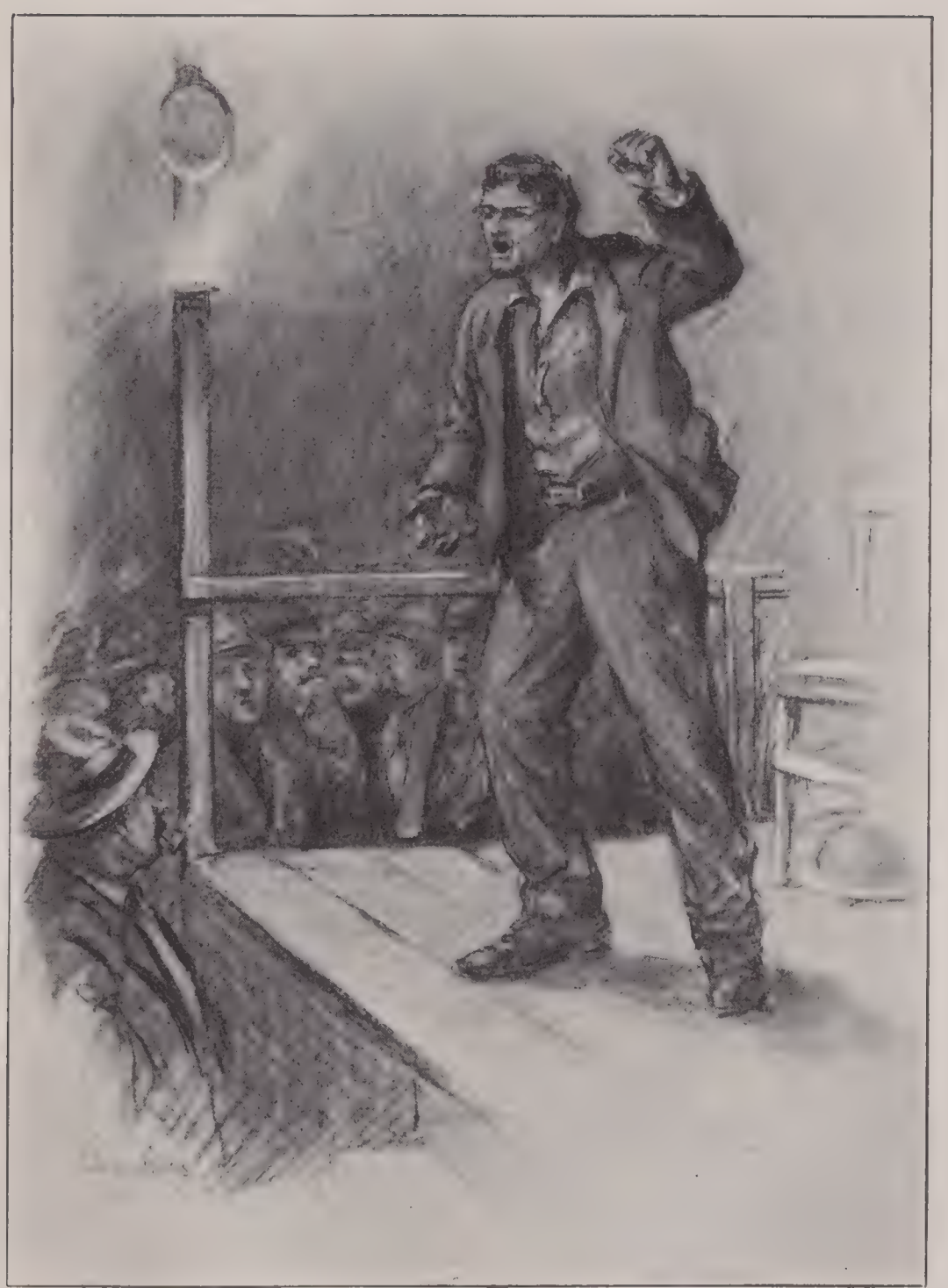
"That's the talk!" cried Gilks. "To the mills! To the mills!" he shouted, swinging his arms wildly. "There they are. It won't take us ten minutes to get there. Let's give the d———d scabs a lesson they won't soon forget. Come on, men!"

With a wave of his arm to the men on the platform, and a wild, demoniacal cry of "On to the mills!" Gilks jumped down into the crowd.

A thunderous roar like the breaking of the sea came up, as with one impulse the crowd massed in a solid phalanx, surged out of the park and made toward the mills.

The police and deputy sheriffs patroling upon the outskirts of the crowd, realized too late the riotous character of the assembly, for as they now broke in upon the howling, yelling, cursing and frenzied mass, in a desperate attempt to disperse it, they were swept aside like straws upon an angry flood.

Crack! sounded the report of a pistol.



"To the mills! To the mills!"

And then another; and yet a third.

Recking not who has fallen, the yelling, maddened mob rushes on, Gilks now at the forefront like a captain at the head of his troops, waving his hands to the crowd to follow, lustily inspiriting the line, and setting the pace at a double-quick.

On, and ever nearer the mills they come, gathering momentum and frenzy as they advance. And now they have reached the mills. The deputy sheriffs there on duty empty their revolvers into the advancing mass, and fly. For a moment the line wavers under the rain of the random bullets, then, pressed by the surging mass behind, again lurches forward.

Warned of the approaching mob, the workers in the mills wait not to be driven away, but, dropping their work, they rush helter-skelter out of the mills, flying hither and thither in the wild *sauve qui peut* of a panic.

Into the mills rush the mob. The workers gone, they wreak their rage upon the machinery. Rolls and furnaces, engines, wheels and beltings, are battered into masses of useless wreckage.

Now the sky is lighted up with a lurid

glare. Flames are shooting from the roofs and crevices of the outlying buildings and sheds, and now, too, in serpent-tongued forks from the windows of the adjacent office building.

Out from the mills rushes the howling, yelling mob, like fiends from the pit of hell. But sobered now by the sight of the burning buildings, the flames from which are bearing upon and threaten the mills, the majority hurry incontinently back to town. A few remain for a time to watch the havoc of the flames, and then slink away, leaving them to do their devastating work.

What the fiends of the mob commenced, the fire-fiends finish. Fierce and strong the wind-borne flames beat against the mill walls. Brick though they be, they melt away under the continued licking of the fire.

And now, all the mill buildings are flame-enveloped. Wall after wall topples and falls, and the unsupported roofs come crashing down to hopeless ruin.

* * * * * * *

In the gray of the early morning the townspeople who turned their eyes millward saw

naught but the two tall, fire-brick chimneys strongly outlined against the eastern sky, towering high and frowningly, like monumental shafts marking the havoc and death of the night.

CHAPTER XXXIII

The Trial of the Conspirators

One policeman and one deputy sheriff had been killed and another policeman seriously wounded, while attempting to disperse the mob as it moved out of the park. Several of the mob, also, had been wounded by the volley the deputies fired into the crowd at the mills.

Aaron Gilks was placed under arrest as he came home late in the night, bleeding and faint from an ugly bullet wound in the head. The next day warrants were sworn out for the arrest of Hermann Schultz and all the strikers who had taken an active part in the meeting in the park, including John Waters. Tom Tenwick was also arrested; for he had distributed the handbills announcing the meeting, and had been seen upon the speakers' platform at the meeting.

Waters's arrest came as a surprise to those who knew him, and especially to those who attended the park meeting and heard his speech. But amid the general excitement

and indignation aroused by the events of the night, the authorities held themselves to no nice discriminations in their attempt to fix the responsibility therefor. The handbill calling the park meeting was signed "Committee." This was taken to mean the strike committee; and of this committee Waters was known to be a member. His presence and prominence at the meeting lent support to this assumption.

But Waters and Tenwick were not without a friend in their misfortune. Mr. Middleton, from his knowledge of the men, was loath to believe that they had any connection with the criminal acts for which they were held. Much to the surprise of the sheriff, and even more to the surprise of Waters and Tenwick themselves, he called at the county jail to see them. Confirmed in his belief in their entire innocence after a talk with them, he went at once and retained Mr. Langdon for their defense, assuming all financial responsibility therefor, and urging Langdon to spare no expense in the preparation of his case in their behalf.

Langdon, likewise fully convinced of Waters and Tenwick's innocence, after an interview with them, made a strong effort

to secure their release on the preliminary hearing which was given all the defendants before the police magistrate.

In this, however, he was not successful. In preliminary hearings but little evidence is required to hold an accused person. Here the presumption in favor of the accused (in theory, at least), upon a regular trial, is reversed. He is presumed to be guilty. The fact of his arrest seems to be enough to condemn him, or at all events throws over him such a shadow of guilt that he must needs be treated like a criminal, incarcerated without bail, and have locked upon his wrists the ugly manacles of the convict.

The police magistrate found enough evidence to hold Waters and Tenwick, along with Gilks, Schultz and the other accused strikers, for the grand jury.

Fruitless, too, were Langdon's efforts to have his clients released on bail, which Mr. Middleton stood ready to furnish. It was a capital charge—the killing of the officers, or legal responsibility therefor—and bail could not be received. All the accused were committed to jail to await the action of the grand jury, which was shortly to convene.

Now, it had not been ascertained who

fired the fatal shots in the park. Aaron Gilks, while not seeking to evade responsibility for his actual deeds, stoutly denied having done any shooting. The other accused strikers made the same denials. Hermann Schultz, ready enough to talk blood, preferred to let others do the shedding of it and he had hurried home without joining the mob.

The taking of human life, however, has always been considered a sufficiently serious thing to justify certain presumptions and fictions in fixing responsibility for the crime where the real perpetrator is unknown. In a certain country (so it is said) the one found nearest the body of the murdered person is apprehended and charged with the murder. This has the merit of simplicity in criminal procedure, at least. Somewhat more complex, although equally certain and sure in the securing of a victim, is the theory of criminal conspiracy: a kind of drag-net, of wide sweep and close mesh, which is a favored device in State's Attorneys' offices where the real culprit may have eluded the vigilance of the police-department sleuths, or where the nature of the crime, the circumstances attending it and the public interest in, and

indignation over it, as well as the character and affiliations of the alleged conspirators, all readily lend themselves to such a mode of procedure.

It is not past belief that the State's Attorney, in the last extremity, would have brought a charge of criminal conspiracy against all the members of the ironworkers' union, holding all responsible for the park murders.

He was not driven to this extremity, however. Information concerning the secret meeting of the strike leaders leaked out; and its scope and purpose, and who participated in it, came fully to light after the "sweat-box" examination to which the accused strikers were subjected.

The public prosecutor now thought his case complete. Here was an unlawful conspiracy. The meeting in the park was in pursuance and in promotion of it, and the murders a direct result of it. The conspirators were therefore responsible for the murders. The same responsibility was laid upon Schultz, Waters and Tenwick on the theory that they came into the conspiracy after it was formed, and aided and abetted its execution.

Upon the theory of criminal conspiracy,

therefore, a bill of indictment against all the accused, jointly, was drawn by the State's Attorney, presented to the grand jury when it met, and by that body found a "true bill." On this indictment, charging murder in the first degree, the accused were arraigned and placed upon their trial.

Langdon, realizing the serious position in which Waters and Tenwick were placed, and the peril in a joinder of their cases with the others, refused other offered retainers in the case, and, at the proper time, made a demand for a separate trial on their behalf. But as the defendants had been jointly indicted, the matter of allowing separate trials lay in the discretion of the court; and that discretion the court exercised in denying Langdon's demand.

Judge Baldwin no longer sat upon the circuit bench. A vacancy had recently occurred on the supreme bench of the State, and general satisfaction was expressed by both press and bar when the governor honored the Nestor of the circuit bench by appointing him to the vacant seat.

Having consulted judicial fitness solely in this appointment, the governor felt at liberty to pay a political debt with the circuit judge-

ship at his disposal through the elevation of Judge Baldwin.

Judge Curdy, the present incumbent of the woolsack of the Ellerton circuit, through the favor of the governor, had smoothed his road to advancement by a judicious mixture of politics with law. He had made himself a considerable political power in his section of the State, and during the last election had done yeoman service for the governor in his gubernatorial campaign.

But the qualities which go to make a good politician are a far remove from those essential to the making of a good judge. Judge Curdy lacked not only the high legal attainments of Judge Baldwin, but he was likewise incapable of that judicial detachment from the cause, the parties and the attorneys in the case, which was so marked a characteristic of his predecessor. An extreme partisan in politics, it was with difficulty that he restrained himself from taking sides in the cases that came before him. And while there was seldom any flagrant exhibition of partiality, his prejudices and his quickly assumed preferences were not slow to develop a bias (frequently an unconscious one) in favor of one side or the other, which tinged his rulings,

jury charges and decisions, and thus disqualified him for a proper discharge of judicial functions.

In view of the public excitement and indignation over the work of the mob, and the consequent popular prejudice against the defendants, it needed a man of a more judicial temper than Judge Curdy possessed to sit in judgment upon their cases, and hold the scales of justice evenly. Of course, in a criminal case, the fate of the accused rests finally with the jury. But jurors are only human (albeit wordy lawyers in their addresses to them are wont to ascribe to them the most transcendent virtues), and other influences besides the legitimate one of the weight of the evidence weave themselves subtly and insensibly into their minds, and are no inconsiderable factors in the formation of their verdicts. Not the least potent of such influences is the attitude and bearing of the trial judge throughout the trial.

Now, whether it was that Judge Curdy was personally so wrought up over the flagrant character of the crimes committed that he was unable to maintain a judicial and becoming balance, or that he was caught up and carried along by the ground-swell of the

public indignation and clamor, certain it is that he gave evidence of an unmistakable bias against the defendants. This was shown in his admission and rejection of evidence, the acerbity of his comments thereon, and, above all, in his final charge to the jury. Indeed, an impartial observer in the court room, and one possessed of average imagination, might easily have imagined himself at a sitting of the Bloody Assizes with My Lord Jeffreys on the bench.

No justification for the court's thus making itself an arm of the prosecution could have been found in any weakness or neglect on the part of the State's counsel. For the State was well and ably represented.

The State's Attorney, a bald-headed, hawk-nosed, keen-eyed, bristle-mustached man, bore the ominous and grewsomely suggestive name of Coffin, a name quite fitting and appropriate for a prosecuting officer, and one that the State's Attorney during his two terms' incumbency of the district attorney's office had seemed ambitious to live up to. Through his exceptional ability and skill as a prosecutor he had been the means of having more than one homicidal culprit measured for his coffin; and now in this, no doubt

destined to be the *cause célèbre* of the circuit, and the most important case of his professional life, he seemed more than ever zealous and determined to impose undertaking duties upon the sheriff.

Mr. Coffin, in short, was a type of the public prosecutor not infrequently met with in courts of justice, with whom it is "anything to convict"; who looks upon his office not as a high public trust to be administered along the lines of professional duty, but rather as a ladder for his own advancement, of which every conviction is an ascending rung; whose concern is not that justice be done but that the accused be convicted; whose prosecution becomes persecution, and who, to secure a conviction, will even stoop to the practices of the shyster and the pettifogger.

Associated with Mr. Coffin as counsel for the State was Mr. Flitwood, of Willard & Flitwood. He had been retained by Mr. Hartland personally, to assist the State's Attorney in the prosecution. Mr. Hartland, in fact, seemed as eager as the State's Attorney to have the defendants convicted; not, it may be imagined, out of any public-spirited solicitude for the vindication of justice, but

to wreak his revenge for the burning of the mills.

The chief counsel for the defense was Truman B. Ellis of Chicago—"True" Ellis as he was familiarly known—one of the leading criminal lawyers in the West, who had been sent to Ellerton by the members of a number of labor organizations in Chicago to succor their brethren in distress.

Mr. Ellis had proved his metal in many a hard-fought legal battle. Besides a thorough mastery of criminal law, he had what is, perhaps, more important still to the criminal lawyer, a command of "jury eloquence." This species of eloquence is not to be measured by the ordinary standards applied to eloquence and oratory. Its persuasiveness and verdict-compelling force lie not so much in a skilful marshalling and powerful enforcing of the favorable points of the evidence, as in beclouding the real issues with extraneous and fictitious ones which allow of free play to imagination and feeling, and afford opportunity for appeals to the emotions of the jurymen rather than to their judgment. In jury speeches embellished by this sort of eloquence there are fine-sounding periods on the greatness and grandeur of our institu-

tions, the jury system, the august and exalted office of jurymen and their weighty and awful responsibilities; upon Constitutional guaranties, the sacredness of life and liberty, the majesty of the law, the white-robed and blinded goddess of justice, with her evenly balanced scales, etc., etc.

Many a desperate case had Mr. Ellis rescued from the toils of incriminating evidence by these eloquent excursions into legal by-paths which wrought a kind of hypnotic spell upon the jury, leading them away from the real issues to find a verdict which, on emerging from their hypnotic trance, they were themselves quite ready to discredit.

There were certain accessories to Mr. Ellis's eloquence that contributed to his hypnotic power. He was of commanding figure—tall and straight as an arrow. His tallness was accentuated by the long, black frock coat of clerical cut that he always wore during the trial of his cases. His dark brown hair falling in long, wavy folds almost to his shoulders gave something of majesty to the shake of his large, well-shaped head. His features were strongly marked, and his face, which was smooth-shaven, had that peculiar, almost classic pallor that is often

seen in men who have been hard drinkers and have retrieved themselves to a life of abstinence. Ellis had, indeed, at one time been addicted to the habit of applying hot and rebellious liquors to his blood. But that the enemy thus put in his mouth had not completely stolen away his brains was evidenced by the fact that after a slow recovery from a fit of delirium tremens he came to the very sensible, if obvious, conclusion that whiskey wasn't good for him, and stopped drinking it.

He was now past fifty, and at the height of his fame as a criminal lawyer. His appearance in behalf of the Ellerton rioters had attracted attention to the case throughout the State, and leading newspapers noted its progress from day to day.

It is needless to say, the case was the absorbing topic of talk in Ellerton, and crowds, limited only by the capacity of the court room, were in daily attendance.

Mr. Middleton was a quite regular attendant upon the trial. Edith, too, occasionally came with him. And it is suspected that Langdon was not now so completely engrossed with the case as to be entirely oblivious of her presence.

The trial lasted three full weeks. Almost the whole of the first week was taken up in impaneling a jury—that wonderful legal fencing by which, after a multiplicity of challenges and counter-challenges to the panel, peremptory, for cause general and particular, and for no conceivable cause at all, the right man is excused and the wrong one retained.

Venire after venire was exhausted in this wearisome winnowing process, and the sheriff now had other than police duty for his numerous deputies in scouring the county for available raw material for this legal whittling.

The panel was finally completed, however, and "twelve good men and true" sat in the jury box to hold the awful balances of life and death in which the defendants were to be weighed.

And now the trial is on. The great crowd in the court room, whose patience has been sorely tried by the long and tedious preliminaries, bends forward in tense expectancy as the State's Attorney rises to open the case for the State.

Carefully and clearly, and with no attempt at oratorical flourish in this opening address, the State's Attorney outlines to the jury what

the State expects to prove—link by link of the chain of evidence that will support the indictment and encircle the defendants with its iron grip.

The State's Attorney's opening address is finished, and now with the swearing of the first witness for the State, the battle is on in earnest. And fiercely is it waged; for the issues are momentous. The great sovereign State has for a time abdicated its beneficent office of Protector to become the vindictive Avenger. It is demanding the highest and last forfeiture from a number of its citizens. Yet, not ruthlessly does it stretch forth its powerful hand. Constrained by self-imposed checks, it proceeds according to the august forms of law. There shall be wager of battle. Not, as of old, with batons and staves, nor with other mere material weapons. It is to be a battle of wits. But like many of the ancient wagers of battle, it is a vicarious battle. The State can contend only through its regularly constituted representatives, and the defendants, lame and blind in the law, are allowed their chosen champions. Doughty champions these are who have entered the lists, and like the valiant champions of old they will do lusty combat until the stars

shine forth at night to release them from the fray.

Through the many eyes in the court room, and through myriad eyes outside it, the State looks on at this contest. With a more vital interest is this fiercely waged battle followed by the prisoners at the bar. There they sit inside the bar, flanked by the sheriff and a number of his trusty deputies. There sits Aaron Gilks with a great patch on the side of his head, marking the all but fatal track of the deputy's bullet. There is yet no trace of submissive penitence in his face, but defiance instead, and rankling hate and contemptuous indifference. There sit his half-dozen fellow conspirators trying, but with poor success, to match the composure of their chief. There is Hermann Schultz with the scared, hunted look of a caged rat, casting furtive looks about, as if seeking a means of escape. There, too, sit John Waters and Tom Tenwick, side by side, in the close friendship of misfortune. The dominant look in Waters's face is that of sadness rather than of fear; a sadness, however, not abiding and settled, but whose gloom is lightened by a ray born of a consciousness of innocence, and whose shadow is softened

and sanctified by the calm resignation that bows submissively to the chastening rod.

Bewilderment is the expression most plainly written in Tenwick's face. Poor Tom! He cannot see why the distributing of a bundle of handbills should have brought him into this lamentable and shameful duress. No, Tom, of course you can't. That lies quite beyond the scope of your simple intelligence. It is a problem only to be grasped and solved by the ingenious and masterful mind of the prosecuting attorney.

Courage! simple-minded and large-hearted Tom Tenwick. Courage! honest John Waters. There at the attorneys' table sits your puissant champion; and he will move heaven and earth to keep from the lips of innocent men the poisoned chalice of avenging justice.

The trial has not proceeded very far before it becomes apparent that the dominant and dominating personality at the attorneys' table is not the noted criminal lawyer from Chicago. It is Langdon. Not that Attorney Ellis is in any way derelict in the conduct of the case on behalf of the defense. He is ready, alert and forceful, skilful in cross-examination, and strong in his argument of law points to

the court. But over all is the atmosphere of insincerity, the taint of professionalism, the cold and bloodless straining of the mercenary. The hands of his clients are not clean of guilt. His task is not to vindicate innocence, but to ward off the descending blows of retributive justice.

Langdon's task is a different and more ennobling one: to clear the innocent from the imputation and reproach of crime, to rescue them from the toils of circumstantial evidence that have enmeshed their unwary feet and in which an ingenious and merciless prosecutor seeks to hold them. It is a task to engage his heart as well as his head, his noblest sympathies as a man as well as his highest efforts and skill as an advocate.

Strong and masterful he rises to the occasion. He has been careful to buttress and fortify his case with that all-essential thing—evidence. He knows, too, what the State must prove, and will try to prove, to convict his clients.

It is beautiful to see how he riddles the State's case against Waters and Tenwick by a merciless cross-examination of the State's witnesses, and completely destroys it by rebutting evidence when he puts in his own

case; how, against a harassing opposition and an adverse court, he drives this evidence home; but above all, how, when the case is closed, he sums up the evidence to the jury in a powerful and eloquent address which reaches high-water mark in the annals of the Ellerton bar, and long remains one of its most cherished traditions.

In face of Langdon's masterly defense, the State's Attorney is shrewd enough to see the weakness of the State's case against Waters and Tenwick, and therefore, lest he weaken his case against the other defendants by a too persistent pushing of a losing fight with Langdon, he masses his legal batteries against the more vulnerable ramparts of Mr. Ellis's defense. Here he delivers some telling blows; for unimpeachable testimony and the court's rulings thereon are powerful aids in his onslaught. Strive as he may—and valiantly does he strive—Mr. Ellis fails to break the force of the incriminating evidence. In an eloquent and characteristic summing up to the jury he seeks to cloak the inherent weakness of his case upon the evidence; to draw the jury away from the cold and incriminating facts in the case by those oratorical blandishments of which he is an acknowledged master.

The State's Attorney will know how to meet this specious, wool-over-eye-pulling argument; and he does meet it in his closing speech to the jury, by a keen, rigid and forceful analysis of the evidence.

Now, finally, comes the charge of the court to the jury, which is strongly against the defendants, qualified only by a short summary of the evidence favorable to Waters and Tenwick, the weight and sufficiency of which as a defense is left for the consideration of the jury.

The jury retire to consider their verdict. It is well along in the afternoon, and Judge Curdy adjourns court until ten o'clock the next morning.

From the time they leave the jury box, through the long night and into the morning hours the jury remain in closeted consultation. But before the hour for the opening of court it is rumored that they have agreed and are ready to report to the court. By ten o'clock the court room is filled to overflowing with an eager, anxious and expectant throng.

The sheriff and his deputies come in with the prisoners. The attorneys are in their places at the attorneys' table. Judge Curdy enters from his chambers and ascends to the bench.

Court is opened. The jury file in from the jury room and take their seats in the jury box. They look wearied and haggard from their long struggle for unanimity, and there is an ominous gravity and seriousness in their faces.

The judge turns toward them.

"Gentlemen, have you agreed upon a verdict?" he asks.

The foreman of the jury rises.

"We have, your honor," and he hands a folded paper to the clerk. The clerk hands it to the judge, who opens and reads it, and gives it back to the clerk to be read aloud.

The clerk reads:

"We, the jury, find the defendants, John Waters and Thomas Tenwick, not guilty; we find the defendants, Aaron Gilks, Hermann Schultz, Henry Hirsh, Robert Dalton, Patrick Flynn, George Baker, Michael Lynch and Anton Helwitz, guilty of murder in manner and form as charged in the indictment, and fix the penalty at death."

A deathlike stillness ensues upon the reading of the last fateful words of the verdict. The silence is broken by Attorney Ellis who rises and asks that the jury be polled. One by one, as their names are called, the jurymen

give an affirmative answer to the question, "Is this your verdict?" their several responses falling like clods upon the coffins of the convicted prisoners.

The State's Attorney moves for sentence on the verdict.

Again Mr. Ellis rises and gives notice of a motion for a new trial, and asks that sentence be deferred pending decision upon the motion.

Sentence is accordingly deferred.

Judge Curdy now turns again to the jury, and with a few commendatory words for their patience during the protracted trial, and their conscientious performance of a disagreeable duty, discharges them.

Waters and Tenwick, having been acquitted by the jury, are now formally discharged by the court. The other defendants are recommitted to the custody of the sheriff to await sentence and the last demands of the law.

Court is adjourned.

The trial is over.

CHAPTER XXXIV

The Law of Conspiracy

A buzz of talk ensued upon the adjournment of court. The crowd in the court room seemed in no hurry to leave, but remained to discuss excitedly among themselves the incidents and result of the trial. There was a craning of necks to get a look at the convicted prisoners as they filed out of the court room, handcuffed to the sheriff's deputies for greater security. Curiosity was not unmixed with commiseration. For although it was the general opinion that these men had received their just deserts, there is yet something awful in the visitation of the law's extreme penalty that evokes a feeling of sympathy for the victims in the breasts of all but the most hard-hearted and vindictive.

True, there was no sign of pity in Mr. Hartland's face as he stood with a number of others having a congratulatory chat with Mr. Flitwood and the State's Attorney. There was, rather, a malignant gleam of satisfaction in his eyes as they fell upon the

doomed men, which said as plainly as words could have said: "Served the scoundrels right. Let lawbreakers have a care how they raise their lawless hands against property!"

A more pleasing group was that of which Waters, Tenwick and Langdon were the center. Friends pushed forward to congratulate the former upon their acquittal, and Langdon upon his triumphant defense. Among the first of these was Mr. Middleton, whose moist eyes and warm hand-clasp testified his great pleasure over the acquittal of the men he believed to be innocent of the grave charge that had been laid against them. Let no one doubt, either, the sincerity of the tears of gratitude that were coursing down the faces of Waters and Tenwick as they grasped the hands of Langdon and Mr. Middleton—the one their deliverer, the other their powerful friend in the hour of their greatest need.

One of Langdon's friends in the court room did not come forward and take his hand. She stood back and waited for her father. But when her father rejoined her and they passed out of the court room she gave Langdon a look (which he caught)—a

look, oh! so different from the one she gave him on a former occasion in that same court room. Who can blame Langdon if amid all the congratulations of the morning he found in that one look the greatest reward of his success?

Not the least cordial and, to Langdon, welcome congratulations came from the attorney for the convicted prisoners. Long inured to the ups and downs of a lawyer's fortunes, Mr. Ellis did not appear very crestfallen over the failure of his defense.

"I don't see why they had to send to Chicago for me," he said as he took Langdon's hand, "when they had such good lawyers right here on the ground."

"Thank you, Mr. Ellis, for your flattering insinuation," returned Langdon with a smile. "But your task was a much harder one than mine."

"It was not an easy one, certainly, in face of the court's rulings as to the law of the case."

"I have grave doubts as to the correctness of some of those rulings," said Langdon.

"There is enough in the record, I think, to reverse the case on appeal. Judge Curdy will probably deny my motion for a new

trial and, of course, I shall then have the record written up and take the case to the supreme court. And I want you to file a brief on behalf of the appellants, Mr. Langdon."

"Well, I suppose I can do that, if you wish it, Mr. Ellis, now that my clients are out of the case."

"All right. I shall depend upon you. I needn't tell you to make it a strong one."

"I will do my best."

"That's all the assurance I want, Mr. Langdon."

Then in a burst of generous appreciation:

"Say, Langdon, why do you want to bury yourself in this town? Come to Chicago. We need men like you. You needn't be afraid of not getting plenty to do."

"Why should Mahomet go to the mountain, when the mountain comes to him?" said Langdon with a quizzical smile. "Chicago's most noted lawyer has just asked me to file a brief in his case."

Mr. Ellis laughed appreciatively at Langdon's happy evasion.

"There are doubtless social ties here that would be hard for you to break," he said, without a thought of making a bull's-eye

hit at Langdon's disinclination to leave Ellerton.

Langdon flushed.

"Oh, yes, there are always other considerations besides business ones in a matter of changing one's domicile," he said, in a tone that he strove hard to make indifferent.

"Well," said Mr. Ellis, "if you ever do get to the point where you feel like making a change, just remember that the latch-string will always be out for you in Chicago."

"Thank you for saying so, Mr. Ellis," said Langdon feelingly.

In due time Mr. Ellis made and argued his motion for a new trial. As he had anticipated, Judge Curdy denied the motion. Judgment was now entered on the verdict, and the convicted prisoners were sentenced to be hanged.

Mr. Ellis then sued out a writ of error, and the case was brought before the supreme court thereon, the writ being made a *supersedeas* to the judgment and execution.

Pursuant to his agreement with Mr. Ellis, Mr. Langdon prepared and filed a brief as of counsel for plaintiffs in error. The appeal was exhaustively argued before the supreme court, the State's Attorney having the assist-

ance of the Attorney-General, who now appeared in the case on behalf of the State.

For three long months after it was submitted the supreme court held the case under advisement, which plainly indicated that the court had considerable difficulty in reaching a decision.

The decision finally came, however, and was announced in a lengthy opinion covering more than fifty pages in the later printed supreme court report.

The judgment of the circuit court was affirmed.

Not that numerous and manifest errors were not found in the record. But, having recourse to the very convenient and often used formula, the court found that viewing the record as a whole the judgment was right—a conclusion that carping critics might consider as equivalent to saying that the defendants ought to hang anyway, even though the proceedings leading to their conviction were irregular.

Could it have been that the supreme court, too, was influenced by the public clamor and the many lurid diatribes of the newspapers against the lawless rioters and anarchists?

Let no one dare say so and incur the grave danger of being publicly pilloried for *lese majeste*. Our supreme court judges, sitting in serene dignity upon their lofty seats, are not thought to have their calm judgments ruffled by the passions and prejudices that sway the judgments of ordinary mortals; and their decisions are not, therefore, considered proper subjects for the criticism of the laity.

True, among themselves their decisions have no immunity from attack.

Witness, now: The majority opinion in this case was all but ridiculed by Judge Baldwin in a vigorous dissenting opinion, in which he came out squarely upon the broad and sweeping proposition that the facts disclosed in the record did not and could not support an indictment for murder. For riot and incitement to riot, for assault, for arson and malicious destruction of property, possibly even for manslaughter, indictments might properly have been laid. But murder was not the contemplated object of the proved conspiracy. That object was the expulsion of the non-union workmen from the mills. Murder was not a necessary incident to the successful carrying out of such a conspiracy. The killing of the police

officers was but coincident with the execution of the conspiracy, not an essential part of it, or necessarily in furtherance of it. From aught that appeared in the record to the contrary the murders may have been the work of miscreants who found the occasion a convenient one for the wreaking of private malice. If it be said that the incendiary speeches of some of the defendants at the park meeting incited the murders, it should be noted that these speeches, so far as they bore upon the police officers, were of a general character and, for the most part, condemnatory of their supposed unjustifiable killing of the two strikers the day before. If the guaranty of free speech was not to be regarded as meaningless surplusage in our organic law, the grave penalty here imposed should never follow even the most incendiary utterances, but should be reserved for the overt act of murder, or its direct instigation. The actual perpetrators of the crime for which the defendants were convicted were, it appeared, unknown. The case presented was the sufficiently familiar one of undiscovered crime. Morally responsible, in a measure, the defendants might be for this crime, and legally responsible for other crimes for which

indictments might have been found. But the facts did not support the indictment upon which they were tried and convicted. The judgment, therefore, Judge Baldwin concluded, should have been reversed.

The opinion went into an exhaustive discussion of the law of criminal conspiracy, and Mr. Langdon had the great gratification of seeing how closely upon this branch of the case Judge Baldwin followed his brief.

With the general public, Judge Baldwin's dissenting opinion did not find very great favor. There was much loose talk and newspaper comment, to the effect that it was a defense of anarchy and lawlessness. Among leading lawyers throughout the State, however, it was recognized as a masterly exposition of the law of conspiracy; and the dissenting rather than the majority opinion in the case will, without doubt, be looked to by the legal fraternity as being the repository of the law upon that important subject.

It was doubtless Judge Baldwin's dissenting opinion that, more than anything else, influenced the governor in granting the petition for clemency that was made on behalf of the defendants. The sentence of death was commuted to life imprisonment

as to all the defendants except Aaron Gilks. As a sop to the Cerberus of public clamor the sentence as to Gilks, the arch-conspirator, as he was regarded, was allowed to stand.

And upon Gilks the sentence of the court was executed.

Gilks received the intelligence of his doom with the same stoicism he had shown throughout the trial. He scornfully refused all priestly consolation. Let the preachers pray for those who condemned him, he said. He didn't need their prayers, unless they wanted to pray that he might be given a Samson's strength and put between the pillars of the social structure to pull the rotten thing down and bury the Philistines with it.

The days preceding his execution he passed in reading Carlyle's "French Revolution," and Dickens's "Tale of Two Cities"; and the night before the fatal day he startled his death-watch by a lusty singing of the "Marseillaise."

To the very last Gilks maintained a stoical fortitude. Without a tremor he mounted the scaffold—his composure being in marked contrast to the very noticeable perturbation of the deputy sheriffs as they went through the grewsome preparations—and his last words

as he stood on the fatal trap were words of rancorous defiance.

Thus died Aaron Gilks. He died as he had lived, a fanatic prophet of discontent, a martyr—as he firmly believed—to the cause of oppressed labor. A martyr he doubtless was, in a sense. To many who reflected upon his defiant and impenitent attitude, he may have brought some searchings of heart as to whether there may not be certain malign social influences working to produce such men as he; and whether the effectual remedy against them may not lie deeper than the barbarity of the hangman's noose or the menace of prison walls. The venomous serpents of the jungle will not be exterminated with the club. They will disappear when the jungle itself is reclaimed from the rank and tangled vegetation wherein they find a congenial habitat, and from whose poisonous vapors their own deadly venom is distilled.

CHAPTER XXXV

Mr. Hartland Takes a Change of Venue

The conviction and sentence of all but two of the indicted strikers had somewhat appeased Mr. Hartland's vindictive thirst for revenge. He would have been better satisfied, however, had the verdict of the jury been complete and sweeping by the inclusion of Waters and Tenwick in its plenary condemnation. And this quite apart from any consideration as to their guilt or innocence of participation in the Hayden Park riot. Mr. Middleton was befriending them; and this was enough to arouse Mr. Hartland's ill-will toward them. For since the decline in the mill company's fortunes he had conceived for Mr. Middleton an unreasoning hatred. With strange obtuseness as to the real causes of the mill company's sad plight, he placed all the blame for it upon Mr. Middleton and his son Philip. The feeling that rankled most was that he had been taken in by both of them; that he had been the willing horse upon whose back they had

unloaded their heavy holdings of mill stock —stock that now bade fair to become all but worthless.

But Mr. Hartland had little time to brood over his supposed wrongs at the hands of the Middletons. The chaotic condition of the mill company's affairs demanded his close and energetic attention. The complete wiping out of the mill plant by the fire rendered immediate resumption of business, of course, out of the question. A circular letter to creditors and customers, advising them of the unlooked for catastrophe, promised an early rebuilding of the mills and resumption of business, and full liquidation of all outstanding accounts.

The company was eased of one heavy burden by a minimized payroll. All the mill workmen, with the exception of a few that were needed to gather together and protect the salvage, were discharged, as was also the entire office force. Temporary quarters for the company were provided by Mr. Hartland at his bank. Here the books of the company (which, kept in the fire-proof vaults in the office building, had escaped the ravages of the flames) were removed, and here, with the assistance of Mr. Cosgrove

and the clerical force of the bank, Mr. Hartland proceeded to a figurative taking of stock.

If he had ever entertained a serious notion of rebuilding the mills and resuming operations, Mr. Hartland soon abandoned that idea in his own mind after a few weeks' work upon the books. The course he settled upon—a course that the logic of the situation forced upon him—was one of liquidation. The process of liquidation, however, was not one of very wide scope. It consisted in a vigorous drawing-in of the assets of the mill company and applying them upon the claim of his own bank, which, through the generous loans that Mr. Hartland had negotiated, was the heaviest creditor of the company.

Had Mr. Hartland only been let alone he might eventually have squeezed enough out of the assets of the company to make his bank whole for its advances. But unfortunately for him he was not let alone. As week after week passed and no move was made to rebuild the mills or to allay the fears of creditors with anything more substantial than promises, the creditors became more and more insistent in their demands for payment, and one of the largest out-of-

town creditors finally appeared in the circuit court with a petition for the appointment of a receiver for the company.

This was trouble enough surely. But, again unfortunately for Mr. Hartland, his troubles did not end here. The petition for a receiver for a concern that through its president, its office quarters and working force was so closely associated with a bank as the mill company now was, could not well help arousing a suspicion as to the solvency of the bank itself. It is not surprising, therefore, that during the day following the application for a receiver there were a number of heavy withdrawals of deposits from the Commercial Bank. The second day saw even greater drafts on the bank's cash reserve; and on the third day, at the hour for the closing of the bank, there was a line of depositors that stretched from the paying teller's window out into the street.

A run on the bank was evidently impending.

None of the bank officials knew better than Mr. Hartland that the bank was in no condition to withstand a run. Again the logic of the situation forced upon him a disagreeable alternative.

The next morning the still larger throng

of depositors that came to draw out their balances found the bank doors closed, the door curtains drawn, and a written notice pasted on the inside of the glass panel of the door so that it could be read from the street. The notice, which was the usual "sparring for wind," announced the suspension of business by the bank for a few days, owing to heavy and unexpected withdrawals; that the bank had ample assets to meet all claims, and that the depositors would be paid in full.

The suspension of Ellerton's leading bank caused the greatest consternation in the city. As is usually the case in bank failures, the blow fell heaviest upon those who were the least able to bear it. Hundreds among the poorer classes had their savings of years in the bank, their all, their little store laid by for the "rainy day" and for dependent age. An excited and angry crowd of these, with blanched faces, gathered on the sidewalk and in the street in front of the bank, muttering imprecations upon the bank officials, and getting what comfort they could from the posted notice and from mingling their hopes and fears with those of their fellows in misfortune.

Neither Mr. Hartland nor any other of the bank officials came to allay the fears of the depositors by word of mouth. Calls at the residences of Mr. Hartland and the cashier only elicited the information that they were not at home.

Could the depositors have looked through the drawn curtains of the bank they would have seen both men busily at work over books and papers. What they were doing may well be left to conjecture in the light of subsequent disclosures. A hint may be hazarded by allusion to the well-known habit and practice of thieves of covering up their tracks.

Beyond doubt, had Mr. Hartland and the cashier been left undisturbed to wind up the affairs of the bank, they would have done this in a way quite satisfactory to themselves, if not to the bank's creditors. But they were not left to be their own assignees in insolvency. The State bank examiner now appeared on the scene, and, with the proverbial hind-sight watchfulness of looking closely to the security of the stable door after the horse is stolen, began a thorough overhauling of the bank's affairs.

He had not pushed his investigations very

far before he uncovered a state of financial rottenness that made him fairly hold his official nose. It was not merely that there was a mass of worthless paper carried on the books of the bank as assets—a thing common enough with very respectable banks—but there were fictitious notes, false entries, strange balance-producing credits and debits, and other financial jugglery that Mr. Hartland had used to cover his heavy and illegal withdrawals of cash. In short, with the connivance of his complaisant cashier, he had fairly looted the bank. Always making a practice of using the bank as a base of supplies when he needed money, he had, within the past few months, practically emptied its coffers to meet his own and the mill company's necessities.

The Nemesis that was so persistently pursuing Mr. Hartland now gave him the final and crushing blow. The bank examiner not only applied to the court for a receiver for the bank, but he laid the ugly facts of Mr. Hartland's peculations before the State's Attorney.

Mr. Hartland being already publicly discredited by the suspension of the bank, the State's Attorney did not hesitate to start

the legal criminal machinery of the State to moving against him. Upon complaint filed charging embezzlement, a warrant was issued for Mr. Hartland's arrest and placed in the hands of the sheriff for service.

The sheriff, taking with him two trusty deputies, went at once to Mr. Hartland's house to make the arrest.

Mr. Hartland himself answered the sheriff's summons at the door, and conducted him and his deputies into the library.

A sadly changed man was Mr. Hartland. His face was line-marked, worry-worn and haggard. His thin gray hair was in a state of dishevelment, and dark rings about his lusterless eyes told of troubled and sleepless nights. There was a noticeable listlessness, too, in his manner, which is often seen in men whose spirit has been completely broken.

The sheriff, with some embarrassment, explained his mission and produced the warrant.

Mr. Hartland took the paper, gave it a careless inspection and handed it back to the sheriff.

"Yes, yes," he said, looking out of the window absently. "Very well—just be seated. I want to step upstairs—I'll be with you in a few minutes."

An uneasy quarter of an hour the sheriff and his deputies waited for Mr. Hartland's return.

"I wonder what he's doing. I guess we'd better"——

What it was that the sheriff thought they had better do, the deputies were left to conjecture, for just then the crack of a pistol resounded through the house, cutting his sentence short.

The sheriff and his deputies looked at one another in startled apprehension.

Hurried steps and confused voices were now heard upstairs.

Hastily ascending the stairs, the officers came upon two of the house servants standing with blanched faces before a closed door.

"This is Mr. Hartland's room, sir," said one of the servants to the sheriff, excitedly. "We're afraid he's done something to himself—he's seemed so worried-like of late."

"Where is Mrs. Hartland?" asked the sheriff, gravely.

"She's gone, sir. Mr. George took her away yesterday."

The sheriff now tried the door. It was locked.

"Mr. Hartland!" he called.

There was no response.

The sheriff made a sign to his deputies. Putting their combined weight strongly against the door they forced the lock, and the door crashed open.

There he lay on the floor. Blood was flowing from a wound in his right temple, and his right hand was still clutching the revolver that he had evidently turned against himself. On a near-by table was a letter addressed to his wife, apparently just written.

Summoned to answer charges in an earthly court, Mr. Hartland had taken a change of venue to a higher one.

Let that Court judge him.

Has he, indeed, and such as he, not already been judged through the mouth of one of the inspired prophets of old?

"He that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool."

There he lay on the floor.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Edith's Letter and its Answer

How was it faring now with Mr. Middleton? Why, not so well—not so very well. Does it ever fare quite well with a man who, not yet within hailing distance of his grand climacteric, is, from any cause, deprived of the work that has engaged his maturer years? Nature seems intent upon keeping her children busy, for she visits them with severe penalties when they are not. She lets us play during the years of physical growth—insists, indeed, that we shall play; for here, too, she has her penalties in stunted physical, mental and moral development for the poor unfortunates whom heartless greed or cruel necessity robs of their kindergarten rights. In our declining years, also, we may not only have dignity with ease, but physical comfort as well. But, oh! in the years of our manhood and womanhood—when we have entered as heirs upon life's great inheritance—then must we be up and doing; and if we are not, Dame Nature will not be slow to manifest

her displeasure with us.

We commiserate—and rightly—the many who toil long hours for a scant subsistence. But let us reserve our greatest commiseration for the man who has nothing to do. A purgatory overwork may well be, but idleness is a veritable inferno.

So Mr. Middleton found it, at any rate, after years of close and unremitting application to the business of the Ellerton steel company. His business day was now a very short one, being limited to the brief hour or two that he spent at the Citizens' Bank in the morning, giving attention to the not very pressing matters connected with his investments. After his quarrel with Mr. Hartland he had transferred his account from the Commercial Bank to the Citizens' Bank; and the officials of the latter institution were more than willing to let such a valuable customer use the bank as his business headquarters.

The short time that he spent at the bank, however, made but slight demand upon Mr. Middleton's capacity for work. Besides—and this was perhaps the worst feature about his present oversupply of leisure—he had now plenty of time to think of Philip; and

thoughts of his son were continually obtruding themselves upon him. While busy with the mill work Philip's absence was less poignantly felt. It was possible even to forget him amid the engrossing duties of the office. But with these duties laid aside, memories of his son thronged upon him with a harrowing persistency.

And yet, sorrow-laden though these memories were, Mr. Middleton cared not to dispel them. For all bitterness of feeling toward Philip had disappeared; there remained only a father's yearning for the love and affection of a lost son. More than once he had taken out the will by which he had disinherited Philip, with the thought of destroying it. But a deep-seated sense of justice restrained him.

"No, no! Something is due to me. He must come back—he must come back."

This was always his concluding thought; and he would put the will away again.

But as time passed, Mr. Middleton assumed more and more the appearance of a man who was in a fair way to having his will probated at no distant day. He lost appetite and flesh. Hollows appeared in his cheeks, and his eyes took on a sunken look. An

unconquerable depression, too, settled upon his spirits, which had its complement in a general impairment of vitality.

Then one morning he failed to put in his usual appearance at the bank. Nor was he there the following day, or the day after that.

Now the doctor's buggy is seen at the house on the hill. Once, twice, then three times every day the doctor calls; and he looks grave as he issues from the house and drives away. He has been unable to diagnose the case from a pathological standpoint. He suspects, however, the main underlying cause of Mr. Middleton's illness. But this underlying cause cannot be reached by anything in his pharmacopœia.

Edith Middleton, too, thinks she knows what the seat of her father's trouble is, and the direction in which the potent remedy is to be sought. And the growing seriousness of his condition determines her to secure that remedy, if possible.

Taking no one into her confidence, she sits down and writes a letter. With her own hand she puts the letter into the letter-box, and then anxiously awaits an answer.

Three days later as the afternoon train

from St. Louis came puffing into Ellerton, and while it was yet a good quarter of a mile from the station, a young man encumbered with nothing heavier than a hand-bag was seen to leap from the moving train at the imminent risk of a broken leg, right himself from the forward thrust of the train's momentum, and then with quick steps take a 'cross-lot short-cut for an evidently well-defined objective point.

What this objective point is he soon makes clear; for now, with no slackening of pace, he begins the ascent of the hill leading to Ellerton's most palatial abode. As he nears the house he stops, and, putting his thumb and forefinger to his mouth, he gives a familiar whistle.

What is that now that comes tearing around the house and bears down upon the young man with the speed of the wind, as if to devour him?

Ah! Prince, it is a long time since you heard that whistle, isn't it? Long have you waited to hear it. Often have you pricked up your ears in eager expectancy only to disconsolately droop them again. No need to ask or to wonder if you are glad to see this young man who drops his hand-bag

to receive your canine greeting. For just look at you now! Up and up you jump, as high as his head and higher. You cut circles around him, rushing madly and with yelps of rapturous delight. Again, you are up and down and all over him, hardly giving him a chance to touch you. Finally, having given vent to the exuberance of your joy, you submit to the bear's hug that he gives you, and he hears that peculiar sound in your throat as if you are trying to tell him how much you have missed him and how overjoyed you are to see him again. Now he releases you and starts for the house, you, Prince, rushing on ahead, and then back to him, and forward and back, yelping out your joy the while in quick, sharp, ear-piercing barks.

"What is Prince barking so for, Edith?" asks Mr. Middleton, feebly.

Edith has heard, and has seen, too, from the window. By a severe tax upon her power of restraint, she represses an exclamation. By not so great a tax upon her regard for strict truth, she says:

"I don't know, papa. I'll run down and see."

Before our young friend below has a

chance to ring, the door swings open and Edith's arms are about his neck.

Prince barks his entire approval of Edith's cordial greeting. Good-mannered dog that he is, he restrains his desire to follow the two into the house. But he does plant himself down at the foot of the steps as if he had fully made up his mind not to let the aforesaid young man get away again.

Mrs. Middleton appears in the hall. Is there a little of consternation mixed with her surprise at seeing Philip?

Philip does not notice it, but kisses her dutifully. Then to Edith:

"How is father? I must see him right away."

They go upstairs. Edith, prevailing upon Philip to remain outside the door, enters the room.

"Papa, some one has come to see you."

Mr. Middleton cannot mistake the significance of his daughter's flushed and joy-beaming face.

"Phil!" he cries, sitting bolt upright in the bed.

Yes, it's Phil, sure enough. For now, impatient of further restraint, he bursts into the room. The sight of his father's pale

and emaciated face strikes him to the heart. Has he been the cause of this? Falling upon his knees at the bedside and burying his face in his hands upon the bed, he cries in a sob-choked voice:

"Father, you told me not to come back until I was ready to come on my knees for your forgiveness. You see me now upon my knees. Forgive me for running away in the way that I did, and for not sending you one kind word in all this time. I was stubborn. I was unkind. Forgive me, father, and give me your blessing."

Tears came to Mr. Middleton's eyes—tears of joy. His hands caressed Philip's head lovingly.

"My dear boy. Take a father's blessing as you once almost had his curse. I guess I was a little inconsiderate, too, at the time. I hope you'll forgive me, Phil, as freely as I forgive you."

Gently he raised Philip's head, and their lips met in a kiss of reconciliation.

Oh, the kiss of father and son! What is like or akin unto it? Not, certainly, the light and careless kiss of friendship; nor that of brother and sister, or of wife or sweetheart. Nor is it like a mother's loving kiss, which,

indeed, has something holy in it. No; different from all of these it is. Deep, virile and vital, it reaches down and takes hold of the very roots of being!

Gently Philip released himself from the embrace in which they had for some moments held each other.

"You must lie down now, father, and rest."

"Not yet, Phil. I'm half-way up now, and I guess I'll get all the way up. There's something I must attend to at once. I may not be able to do it later. Edith—my dressing-gown and slippers."

"Oh, papa, you mustn't!" said Edith, alarmed. "You're not strong enough yet. Let us do it for you."

"No," said Mr. Middleton insistently. "It's something I must do myself. Come, Edith dear—gown and slippers."

Edith, wondering what it was that was so urgent, and with some misgivings as to the effect of the unusual exertion upon her father, brought the dressing-gown and slippers, and, with Philip's assistance, helped him into them.

Supported by the two, Mr. Middleton started for his study. Reaching the secretary

he opened a drawer and with trembling hand drew out two red-ribboned and red-sealed documents. Glancing at the indorsements he dropped one back into the drawer, and with the other clutched in his hand started back to his bedroom and made for the fireplace where a bright, coal fire was burning. Sinking into a chair in front of it, he opened the document to be assured that he had the right one. Turning over the pages his eye finally rested upon a familiar paragraph.

"One dollar—one dollar," he muttered. "Yes, this is it."

"Phil," he said, turning to Philip with just the suggestion of a twinkle in his eye, "this is my will, that I made just after you left me. It leaves you the sum of one dollar. But I have come to the conclusion that you may have need of a little larger working capital than that, and so—"

With that he threw the paper into the fire and silently watched it flare up into flame and die down into a shrivelled mass of paper ash. This he dispersed with a few vicious punches of the poker.

"There—that's done," he said, breathing a sigh of relief. "Now I guess I'd better

He threw the paper into the fire.

get back into bed."

"Why, papa," said Edith with a laugh, and kissing him, "I should have been glad to do that for you."

"Oh, I know that, my dear, even though it cuts a big hole in your inheritance; but I wanted the satisfaction of doing it myself."

"We're none of us going to get anything through your will, father—not for a long time to come," said Philip cheerily, as he put his arm about him and assisted him to rise.

"No, indeed, we're not," affirmed Edith, supporting her father from the opposite side.

"I don't want to go now," said Mr. Middleton, with moist eyes and putting his arms affectionately around them both, "for I have my heaven on earth."

An hour later when the doctor called, Mr. Middleton was sleeping peacefully. The doctor greeted Philip warmly, for they were friends. Then stepping to the bedside he looked into the face of the sleeper. His quick, professional eye at once detected a favorable change. To assure himself he put his ear upon Mr. Middleton's breast over the region of his heart, and then felt and timed his pulse. Dropping the hand upon the coverlet, he turned to Edith and Philip

who were eagerly awaiting his report.

"Your father is out of danger, my dears," he said with a smile. "I'll stake my professional reputation, now, that he gets well. You're the tonic that he needed, Phil," giving Philip a cordial slap on the back.

Edith kissed Philip, and then, in her joy could not refrain from kissing the doctor also.

"Oh, ho!" he chuckled. "That's a fee I didn't expect. But it's all right. I promise you I won't tell a certain lawyer in town that I know."

Whereat Edith flushed, and Philip looked at her narrowly.

"Aha! What's this you've been up to, little sister, since I've been gone?"

"None of your business, Mr. Inquisitive," retorted Edith. "Nothing worse, anyway, than you've been up to in St. Louis, I'll warrant."

"Sh!" said Philip, beating a retreat. "We'll wake father."

But Mr. Middleton would not have been easily awakened. He was sleeping the deep and restful sleep of convalescence, sleep that brings tone to flagging nerve and tissue, and rallies all the dormant forces in life's citadel.

He slept soundly without a break through

the night, and awoke the next morning refreshed and—hungry. He dispatched with relish a couple of soft-boiled eggs, a plate of toast and a cup of coffee. And afterwards he called for a cigar and the morning paper!

CHAPTER XXXVII

An Industrial Revival

Mr. Middleton's convalescence was rapid. The third day after Philip's return he was sitting up. Happy days were these—these days of convalescence. Philip was with his father constantly. His father could not bear to have him out of his sight, seeming to be nourished and to thrive upon his mere silent presence in the room.

Yet much they talked about; for much, indeed, they had to talk about. Philip was eager to hear about all that had happened during his absence, and his father still more eager to listen to Philip's recital of his experiences in his battle with the world on his own account.

As Mr. Middleton grew stronger, they began to plan for the future. For no more were they to be separated, these two. Philip must run back to St. Louis—but no hurry about his going, his father insists—close up his affairs there, hurry back home—and about his hurrying back his father is still

more insistent—and then—well, it is the *then* that they enthusiastically talk about and plan for.

In due time, therefore, and when Mr. Middleton is quite himself again, Philip does return to St. Louis and close up his affairs—all but one. This one affair he shows a strange disinclination to have closed, leaving it, indeed, in such an unfinished state that repeated short trips to St. Louis to attend to it will be necessary in the future. The unfinished stage in which Philip leaves this affair seems, however, to be entirely satisfactory to the other parties—or party—to it.

Upon Philip's return from St. Louis after winding up his business there, he and his father set about in earnest to put into execution their much talked-of plans. Mr. Cosgrove was a frequent party to their conferences. It may not be difficult to guess, therefore, what the subject of these conferences was.

Yes, the task they set before themselves to accomplish was the rehabilitation of the Ellerton Iron & Steel Works.

As a first step in this direction, they bought from Mr. Hartland's administrator all the steel company stock that he held as administrator of Mr. Hartland's estate. This com-

prised the bulk of the company's stock. Steel stock, as may be imagined, was not a particularly choice asset at this time, and the administrator was very glad to dispose of the estate's holdings to Mr. Middleton and his associates at the price they offered; a price (in the administrator's opinion) far in excess of the real value of the stock.

The next step was to get the receiver who had been appointed for the company, discharged. This was no difficult matter. The principal creditors, on learning that Mr. Middleton had bought up most of the stock with a view to restoring the shattered fortunes of the company, readily consented to the discharge of the receiver, and to restoring the management of the company to its stockholders.

The receiver discharged, the company was now reorganized, with Mr. Middleton as president, Philip, vice-president, and Mr. Cosgrove, secretary and treasurer.

Then began the work of rebuilding and equipping the mills. Mr. Middleton's confidence in the future was shown by the fact that the projected plans for the new mills were upon no meager scale, but contemplated an even greater plant than the company had

before. He had some reason for his confidence, however, in the many reassuring letters he received from old customers of the company, and in the further fact that the black cloud of panic and depression that for more than two years past had hung like a pall over the business world was lifting, promising fairer and more prosperous days.

Certainly the reorganization of the mill company, with Mr. Middleton again at its head, and the rebuilding of the mills infused new life into business generally in Ellerton. For this revival of the city's chief industry meant again a busy army of clerks and workmen, money, and consequently increased trade in all lines of business.

Naturally enough, the old stockholders of the company were elated over the resuscitation of the company, and the prospect of future dividends on their stock. Mr. Munson drew his two-share certificate from the pigeonhole of his desk into which he had some months ago carelessly thrust it, blew off the accumulated dust, and, after looking it over with rising pride of possession and ownership, carefully put it away in his safe. He again assumed the importance of proprietorship in the mills and began to talk pompously about

what "we" were going to do when the mills were rebuilt and made ready for business. But whatever damage he may have caused the company in thus advertising his connection with it he probably more than made good by the two-column space he gave in the *Argus* to a "write-up" on the reorganized company, which Philip furnished him.

It is needless to say that the former mill workmen were glad to see the walls of the mills rising again. The strike had been quite as disastrous to them as it had been to the company. Many of them had been out of work ever since the strike; and even those who managed to secure employment found it usually intermittent and unremunerative. Most of the workmen under the Hartland régime had drifted away from Ellerton after the destruction of the mills. Many of the strikers had likewise left the city to seek work elsewhere. Those who remained were fain to support themselves and their families as best they could from the avails of odd jobs, when they were fortunate enough to get them, from their slender savings, and from the still more slender allowances made to them by the union from its benefit fund.

Thanks to Mr. Middleton's friendship, it

had not gone so hard with John Waters and Tom Tenwick. After their triumphant acquittal on the trial for alleged complicity in the Gilks conspiracy, Mr. Middleton had advanced to Waters enough money to purchase a three-acre tract of land which lay adjacent to his (Waters's) home lot. This patch of ground Waters had dug up and planted with small fruits and vegetables, taking Tenwick in with him on shares. From the proceeds of this market-garden they were supporting themselves comfortably. For besides the cash receipts from their sales they supplied their own tables with fresh fruit and vegetables.

The venture might not, indeed, have proved very profitable had Tom been permitted to huckster the produce. Waters allowed him to do this in the beginning of their marketing, but after several trials was compelled, in the interest of a prudent management of the business, to attend to this part of it himself. Tom would start out in the morning with horse and cart, the cart well loaded with garden stuff, and Tom sufficiently instructed, too, as to quantities and prices; but he would invariably return in the afternoon, with all the produce disposed of, it is true, but with

an awful disparity between the morning's invoice and his cash receipts. Tom's all too generous nature was not proof against the many cases of destitution that he encountered in his rounds. He gave away more than he sold; and even where he made sales his prices were always sufficiently flexible to meet the slender purses of his indigent customers. Waters, while not blind to cases of need, was more prudent and discriminating in his charities; enough so, at any rate, to keep the business from being crippled by reason of them. To gratify Tom, however, he allowed him to be the almoner of the firm, under his supervision. But even this was not without some peril to the business; for the extent of Tom's information as to the urgent cases of need in the city was surprising.

Waters and Tenwick both joined heartily in a liberal thank-offering to the poor on the day they heard of Philip's return. They were among the first of his friends that he went to see, and none gave him a heartier or more heartfelt greeting.

John Waters had devoted a good portion of his leisure time to thinking out improvements on his mill runway. A number of betterments had, in the course of time, sug-

gested themselves. With these in view—making, as he believed, his contrivance more convenient and practicable—he was not greatly disappointed over Philip's report that, owing principally to the prevailing industrial depression, he had not been able to interest mill owners in the invention sufficiently to get them to have the runway installed and tested.

With Philip's assistance, Waters made application for patents on his improvements, and now, with the assurance from both Philip and Mr. Middleton that the invention would be given a practical test, he anxiously awaited the reopening of the mills.

But while Mr. Middleton was thus willing to experiment in the matter of the mill equipment, he took no chances when it came to the selection of a superintendent. He early put himself in communication with former Superintendent Mitchell, and it was with the greatest satisfaction that he finally closed a contract with that experienced mill man to again take the superintendency of the mills.

In due time the office and mill buildings were completed, and the mills, under Superintendent Mitchell's skilful supervision, properly equipped and efficiently manned. John

Waters was made "Boss Roller," with Tenwick as his chief lieutenant at the rolls.

The company already had enough orders on hand to work the mills to their full capacity for some time to come. Mr. Elridge, on learning of the reorganization of the company with Mr. Middleton and Philip in control, sent in a large order on behalf of his road, with his personal congratulations and assurances of future business.

And so again, night and day, the mill chimneys belched their smoke and flame, and in and about the mills recurred the hum and din of their manifold activities. A new life sprang forth from the ruins of the old, and all the unhappy and tragic memories of the past, like the figments of a horrid dream, were dispelled with the dawn of the new day.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Conclusion

In the nature of things, of course, there is, and can be, no absolute conclusion to anything. In all things upon this great round globe of ours, and in the limitless universe of which it is an infinitesimal part, there is unceasing movement and change, but conclusion never. Finis is but a fiction, finality only a relative term. Ebb and flow there is, and cycle upon cycle, but the end is always not yet. Eternity is writ large upon the face of nature, and in the innermost soul of humanity is indelibly stamped the seal of the everlasting. On and on, and forever, beats the great heart of Being, its strong and measured pulsations unchecked by Noachian flood or any other direful cataclysm. With the creative fiat of the great First Cause was coupled the binding and irrevocable decree: *Esto perpetua.*

So, in the lives of individuals and of nations, in forces, movements and events, there is, in reality, neither beginning nor ending.

The thing which is, is bone and flesh of that which has been and of that which is to be. All things are knit together in a universal oneness and unity by a continuous and unending thread.

Nevertheless, in mundane affairs, it is with no dubious meaning that we speak of a beginning and an end. Relative terms though these be, we make convenient use of them. For practical purposes there certainly is a beginning and an end, an inception and a conclusion, a first and a last.

Not to go further afield—this narrative undoubtedly had a beginning, and it must needs have an ending. To make that ending, it is hoped, an acceptable one, there must be another hiatus in the annals of this tale.

Six years have passed since the reopening of the Ellerton mills under the management of the reorganized company. The confidence of the creditors of the company in Mr. Middleton had been fully justified. Every dollar of indebtedness of the company was paid, even the heavy indebtedness to the Commercial Bank, and the receiver of the bank was thereby enabled to pay a very substantial dividend on the claims against the bank.

The business of the mill company had,

indeed, prospered beyond the most sanguine expectations of its officers. Besides the natural effect of the general revival of business, the output of the Ellerton Iron & Steel Works had come to be regarded in the iron and steel world as of standard quality, and the company's imprint as a sufficient guaranty of high-class work. More than this, Mr. Elridge was not now alone in believing that good luck would attend the traffic over the Ellerton company rails. For the working conditions in the mills and the relations between the company and its employees had become as well advertised as the mill output.

Instead of a night and day shift in the mills, of twelve hours each, there were now three shifts of eight hours each. And the contents of the pay envelopes were quite as large as under the old order. For—and here was now the unique thing in the management of the Ellerton mills—the company had taken its workmen into its entire confidence. That is to say, the business was treated as a joint enterprise. A statement was made by the company at the beginning of each year to the workers' union as representing the workmen. This statement was in the nature of a balance-sheet, showing

the business done and profits made by the company during the year past. Whenever these profits were large enough to warrant an increase in dividends, there was a proportionate increase in the wages of the workmen who had been on the payrolls during the time covered by the statement.

Besides the pecuniary advantage to the workmen from this sliding scale of wages—which owing to the steadily increasing business and profits of the company had been a constantly ascending one—another like advantage was always open to them in the opportunity afforded them by the company to buy its stock. Any workman who so desired could have a portion of his wages retained by the company, and when the sums retained aggregated one hundred dollars, a full-paid and non-assessable share of the company's stock was issued to him, upon which he drew his regular dividends as a stockholder.

Many of the workmen—nearly all of the older workmen, in fact—had availed themselves of this opportunity to take stock; and this steady increase of stock-holding among the workmen had drawn them into closer and closer sympathy with the company by

the bond of a common interest, and had given to the mill business more and more the character of a co-operative enterprise.

The workmen still have their union; and it is larger and stronger than ever. But it is no longer upon a belligerent footing. Its purposes are largely social and recreative. There is little discussion upon the subject of wages, but much upon ways and means for making the work in the mills more productive and efficient.

Philip Middleton is a frequent attendant upon the meetings of the union, entering freely into its discussions and finding always an attentive and appreciative audience for his suggestions and counsel.

He still, too, much to Tom Tenwick's delight, comes into the mills occasionally and takes a turn at the rolls, giving himself, as he says, a little vacation, as well as the workman whom he relieves.

Tom Tenwick is now "Boss Roller." To fit the dignity of this position he appears at the union meetings in a new frock coat; and it is needless to say that he is more than ever careful of his coat-tails.

Tom has made a further addition to his wardrobe in the shape of a pair of cuffs,

whose pronounced tendency to put themselves very much in evidence he will no doubt in time learn to successfully restrain.

John Waters has been advanced to the position of assistant superintendent of the mills. His patented runway, with the few further changes that the practical test of it showed to be expedient, has proved a success, and has entirely displaced the old and cumbersome "buggy" method of transferring the bars from the furnaces to the rolls. Not only is it exclusively used in the Ellerton mills, but the "Waters Telegraph," as it is called, is coming into general use in steel mills throughout the country. The company bought the patent from Waters, and the runway is now one item in the company's output. When an order is received for one of the runways Waters is sent by the company to install it and initiate the mill men into its use.

The runway, however, is likely to be eclipsed by a further invention that for two years past Waters has been working on. This is no less a thing than a new puddling-furnace. If finally perfected it will mark a new departure in the process of puddling, and entirely revolutionize that important

branch of rolling-mill work.

What with his salary as assistant mill superintendent, the liberal royalties paid him by the company on the sales of his runway, his mill stock—of which he owns a good-sized block—and above all, the returns likely to be realized on his puddling-furnace, Waters is in a fair way to become a rich man. Prosperity has not spoiled him, however. He is the same plain, unassuming, unpretentious, honest John Waters that he was before he had a bank account. For Waters goes far back of all the material blessings that have come to him to find the one red-letter day in his life's calendar: back to the day when Philip Middleton came and took his place at the rolls. That is, and will always remain his day of days, sacredly and secretly enshrined in his own heart, its abiding influence finding outward manifestation only in the simplicity and singleness of his life, in the many acts of kindness done, and the sympathy and encouragement he has given to those less fortunately placed than himself, which have made him loved and respected by every man in the mills.

In less than a year after Philip Middleton returned home from St. Louis, he plucked

up courage enough to close up the unfinished piece of business that he had left behind him. Miss Katherine Elridge is now Mrs. Philip Middleton. She did not, however, at once cease applying the lesson Philip had taught her. During the first year of their married life she was a frequent visitor at the offices of the mill company, where she put the business knowledge she had gained in St. Louis to good use in relieving first one and then another of the young lady typewriters employed there. And she will allow it to be in no derogation of the value and significance of this kind of work that in later years she has confined herself to the three fields of activity, "*kirche*, *kinder*, *kuche*," which fulfil the German housewife's conception of a woman's sphere.

Not a great while after Philip's marriage there was a quiet wedding at the house on the hill. As illustrating how our ambitions and purposes are sometimes realized in ways not at all of our own seeking, Mrs. Middleton, who, with the lofty ambitions for herself and daughter heretofore noted, strenuously opposed her daughter's alliance with an obscure small-town lawyer, has since had abundant reason for gratulation that Edith

followed her own heart in the selection of a husband. For Elisha Langdon has not only forged to the front in his profession—one of the leading law firms in the State is that of Willard, Flitwood & Langdon—but high political honors have come to him as well. Attending the last congressional convention of his party as a delegate he quite captivated the convention with his speech seconding the nomination of one of the leading candidates; and the factions, getting into a deadlock on the leaders, compromised on Langdon, and with a great hurrah nominated him as the congressional standard-bearer of the party. He was triumphantly elected; and not long after he had taken his seat in Congress he made a most telling speech on a subject of general interest at the time—a speech that attracted the attention of the entire country by its statesmanlike breadth of view, and the reported immediate effect of its delivery upon the House. The speech gave Langdon a commanding position in Congress and marked him as a coming man in the councils of the nation.

Mrs. Middleton visited her daughter in Washington at a time when the social season was at its height, and had the great pleasure

of meeting the President and numerous other dignitaries at the nation's capitol. And so, she has been made happy. Her ambitions are realized. It is with a satisfied pride that she now speaks of Congressman Langdon, her "daughter's husband."

Well, who will be so ungracious as to curl the lip at a woman's vanity? More often than not she is the better for its gratification. Gratified vanity tends to make people more amiable. Thwarted ambition only adds to the number of misanthropes. Varied, indeed, are the ambitions of men and women —as varied as human kind. Some of them seem trivial, commonplace, sometimes even unworthy. But their realization is the flowering forth of the individual life, to be followed in due time by the ripened fruitage after its kind.

Note this: that Mrs. Middleton's entertainments and receptions are on a grander scale than ever. Nor is she loath even to join her husband and Philip and his wife in now and then throwing open the great house on the hill to a reception for the mill workmen.

Oh, fear not, ye fastidious! Be assured that the men come to these receptions in

their best bib and tucker—Tom Tenwick is not the only one with a frock coat—and they are clean of hand and face and body.

Neither let it be matter for surprise that a woman of Mrs. Middleton's social prejudices and predilections should condescend to come into such close touch with the proletariat. A sufficiently adequate motive may be found in the fact that the workmen all had votes, and the tenure of office of Congressman Langdon, her daughter's husband, depended upon the electorate of his district.

Be this as it may, Mrs. Middleton conducted herself at these democratic gatherings with rare tact and amiability, not only making votes for Langdon, but insuring a warm place in the hearts of the mill men for the great lady in the house on the hill.

Time has dealt gently with Mr. Middleton. It has touched his hair with a becoming gray, but has left his face unmarked with the lines that tell of the passing years. Hale and hearty, he does his work with joy, and with bright eye and hopeful heart looks out into the future undismayed. Grandchildren have come to add strengthening bands to the ties of parental affection, and their merry prattle is the cheering promise to his ear of

a perpetuated name and lineage. In all things pertaining to the management of the mills he is at one with Philip. When any important matter touching the business or management of the mills is broached to him, it is beautiful to see the glow that will come into his face as he says: "You see my son about this," or: "I'll talk this matter over with my son, and we'll see what we can do about it."

When Langdon and his wife are home from Washington they are, of course, frequent visitors at the house on the hill. On these occasions Mr. Middleton will leave Edith with her mother and take Langdon off with him to the library. Here, comfortably ensconced in his large leather arm-chair and with the solace of a fragrant Havana, he delights to draw Langdon into a discussion of any subject that offers an inviting field for diversity of opinion and debate. He finds Langdon not quite so ingenuous and academic in argument as on that first night of intellectual battle with him—for Langdon has been some time now in Congress—but just as strong in his convictions and with ideals as high. When Mr. Middleton has finished his cigar Langdon, who has not yet

learned to smoke, leads the way across the hall into the drawing-room where his solace will be awaiting him. He throws himself with easy self-possession into a chair near the piano and looks toward his wife. With a smile of understanding, Mrs. Langdon seats herself at the piano and plays Chopin's "Twelfth Nocturne," her interpretation of which has been deepened and broadened by the richer experiences of life that have come to her. When she has finished playing she seeks her husband's face with never-failing confidence to read there anew what she read when she played the piece for him the first time. And her firm trust that she will always read there the same world-old story is her most priceless possession and the source of an abiding joy.

The End.

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